ON HOPE AND MARDI GRAS • REBECCA SOLNIT

THE Nation.

TEA PARTY HYPOCRISY
THE EDITORS
GARY YOUNGE

ON TOLSTOY
WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ

THE MEDIA-LOBBYING COMPLEX

TV PUNDITS' DOUBLE LIVES AS CORPORATE FLACKS

SEBASTIAN JONES

MARCH 1, 2010
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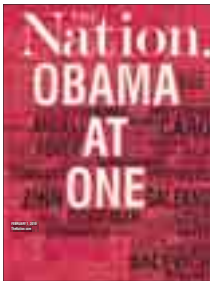

Our Readers and the Obama Promise

Jeffersonville, Pa.
The "Obama at One" issue [Feb. 1] shows exactly why progressives are at a disadvantage. The divergent, even contradictory, positions expressed reflect a movement in disarray. Meanwhile, conservatives remain a unified juggernaut. Congressional Republicans are in near-total opposition at every turn. On the left, by contrast, we see division. Perhaps such diversity of opinion reflects an orientation that fosters intellectual diversity. As good as that is, it suggests that energy is being spent in internecine quarreling.
Mark D. Marotta

Scotts Valley, Calif.
Bernie Sanders's ideas are all good, but they don't address what got Obama elected: he offered hope for change, and then nothing changed. The crooks and lobbyists still run Washington; Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld's unconstitutional practices are still in effect; we are still bleeding treasure and lives in the Middle East; the insurance industry still controls healthcare. Real change would consist of a flat-out progressive offensive that reversed every practice visited upon the nation since the Republican revolution; rolled out Medicare for all; reinstated the Wagner Act, Glass-Steagall, usury laws and a full-blown replica of the WPA! That would give the GOP and the Blue Dogs something to scream about and give the people who had hope in '08 something to work and vote for. And it might save the Obama presidency.
Howard F. Sosbee

Bangor, Me.
In his assessment of Obama's first year, Ariel Dorfman cites the "woeful mishandling of the Honduras coup." The coup was not mishandled. Clearly Obama did not want the democratically elected president, Manuel Zelaya, back in power. Obama's handling of the coup was not a case of incompetence but one of successful policy implementation.
Lawrence Reichard

Bloomington, Ind.
Your issue on Obama's first year only hinted at its most basic lesson: our anachronistic system is bankrupt. In any other democracy, an executive with Obama's skills and sizable majorities would already have passed healthcare reform, climate change laws and banking regulation. The source of Obama's failure is our eighteenth-century government, crafted by men deeply skeptical of democracy. The Senate discriminates against voters in the populous states. The Electoral College is a quaint leftover. The Supreme Court is more powerful than its foreign peers. Our constitutional amendment procedures are the most rigid on the planet. At every juncture, well-organized obstructionists can block legislation. Our system places undue burdens on those who seek reform while privileging defenders of the status quo. Your writers should not blame Obama but an obsolescent system badly in need of an overhaul. We elected a pretty decent new president last year. Now we need a new democracy.
William E. Scheuerman

Raleigh, N.C.
I was happy when Obama was elected, but I knew thinly veiled racism would continue to prevail. I was also apprehensive about his ability to translate his rhetoric into reality and am disappointed that he can't seem to turn the corner. I feel he was elected to be a Democratic president, not a bipartisan one, especially since the Republicans clearly have no intention of being bipartisan. But despite a mixed-results first year, I still think he might become the leader his rhetoric projected!
Joseph Sedlak

Arlington, Va.
Not one of the twenty contributors to your forum mentioned the president's failure to act on his pledge to be a "fierce advocate" for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights, though he reiterated it at a Human Rights Campaign gala and at a White House reception for GLBT advocates. He

(continued on page 24)

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Tea Party Hypocrisy

"Energy. ~~Budget~~ Tax cuts. Lift American spirits." This was the infamous list of talking points scrawled on Sarah Palin's palm when she stood to address the first-ever Tea Party Convention in Nashville. It's fitting, given that the agenda of Palin and the movement for which she has become a tribune is short on details about how to govern the country. "Lift American spirits" is about as substantive a description of their agenda as you're likely to hear.

EDITORIAL

Such vagueness has served the movement well, allowing it to claim to be many things it is not. There has arisen in some quarters a quaint and dangerous notion that the tea party movement is an entirely new phenomenon—a bipartisan, organic channeling of broad (and rational) distrust of and disgust with America's main institutions, particularly Wall Street and Washington, which seem to have formed a perfectly closed loop of rent-seeking and self-dealing. According to Tea Party Patriots national board member Mark Meckler, "Although we are conservative in political philosophy, we are nonpartisan in approach. Both parties need to re-dedicate themselves to the principles of our founding fathers and remember that this should be the government of 'We the People' and not of special interest groups or pork-laden politics."

While the energy and outrage may be genuine and organic, we should not fool ourselves into seeing this as anything but a right-wing reactionary movement, one whose themes (jingoism, militarism and a cult of victimhood at the hands of sundry nefarious betrayers) are as old as the John Birch Society. And yet, because the details of the tea party's worldview remain obscure, it's startlingly popular with the broader public. Forty-one percent of respondents in a recent NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll have a positive opinion of the tea party movement. According to the same poll, the Democratic Party was viewed favorably by only 35 percent. The Republican Party fared even worse with 28 percent.

It is useful for branding purposes that the right-wing organizers and activists draping themselves in nostalgia for the founding fathers not find themselves tied in the public mind to the Republican Party, loathed by a significant minority of the electorate and distrusted by an overwhelming majority. The reason is not hard to divine: over the last decade, the GOP ran the country into the ground. While the party's rhetorical fidelity is to small government and a big military, it has for decades been operationally committed to no philosophy other than perpetual war, upward redistribution of wealth, the defense of corporate power and white Christian identity politics. But despite the tea party's arm's-length stance toward the GOP, these are precisely the values for which it stands.

What's genius about the tea party branding is that it can shift the focus from the governing record of the right wing to a fantasy vision of a Ron Paul–meets–Ayn Rand twenty-first-century insurrection based on principles fuzzy enough to resonate with much of the populace. After all, who doesn't hate the bailouts?

While that's the grassroots message the GOP is stoking and associating itself with, its poobahs are busy laying the groundwork for a restoration of what James Galbraith aptly calls the Predator State. According to a recent *New York Times* article, the Wall Street titans of finance, who gave unprecedented monetary support to Barack Obama (and have invested heavily in the neoliberal wing of the Democratic Party), have had

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their feelings hurt by the occasional and exceedingly gentle remonstrations from the Obama administration and are funneling more cash to the GOP. Seeing as how not a single Republican voted for the mild financial reform bill in the House, this seems like a marriage with promising prospects.

While the tea partyers bash the bailouts, conservative politicians like John Cornyn skulk around New York hustling to get their hands on some of that bailout-facilitated campaign cash. It's a fresh version of the tried-and-true GOP approach described by Thomas Frank in *What's the Matter With Kansas?*, though this one is more audacious: rather than using social issues to distract from an economic agenda favoring the plutocracy, rage over bank bailouts provides cover for efforts to raise money from banks and stymie bank regulation.

Rank hypocrisy has never spelled doom for a political party in America, and it won't hurt the tea party so long as its views remain opaque. The easiest way to highlight the contradictions between the vaguely attractive populism of the tea partyers and the decidedly unpopulist governing vision of the party they serve is to attack the banks with a tea party–like zeal and force the GOP to close ranks around its new financial benefactors.

A 2010 Elections Primer

COMMENT

No one needed a surprise result from Massachusetts or unexpected Congressional retirements to figure out that the dynamics of the 2010 election season are volatile. With an unstable economy, an ill-defined "war on terror" and polls showing Americans who thought the country was steered off course by Republicans now think it's headed in the wrong direction under Democrats, this is shaping up as a wild race through uncharted territory. For progressives—as frustrated by Democratic compromises and missteps as they are frightened by the extremism of a reconstituted right and suddenly swaggering Republicans—it's an unsettling moment.

With Washington Democrats wrangling among themselves and spinning off-message, and with Republicans shape-shifting with agility, it's easy to imagine the worst. But the 2010 cycle, while complex and demanding, need not be a nightmare for us: it should be understood as a multi-tiered challenge with opportunities to get things right. Here are seven ways to think about the fight for Congress and the statehouses:

1. *It's Not About Sixty Senators.* The obsession in 2009 with building a caucus big enough to thwart Republican filibusters made it seem like a substantial Democratic majority was meaningless. Democrats handcuffed themselves by adhering to rules that gave power to "moderate" Republicans, corporate-toady Democrats like Nebraska's Ben Nelson and Montana's Max Baucus, and Connecticut Independent Joe Lieberman. It's unlikely that a GOP tidal wave will shift control of the chamber, but it is equally unlikely, given the retirements and incumbent vulnerability, that Democrats will get to, let alone beyond, sixty. Worrying about either scenario is madness. For progressives, the point should be to make the Democratic caucus more left-

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leaning and activist. Don't fret too much about the fate of Southern and border-state compromisers (Arkansas's Blanche Lincoln, Indiana's Evan Bayh). Worry about re-electing progressives like California's Barbara Boxer and Wisconsin's Russ Feingold. Think about helping progressive, or at least mainstream, Democrats win seats vacated by GOP incumbents in Missouri, New Hampshire and Ohio. The point is not merely to elect Democrats but to forge a caucus that is less tied to the old ways of doing things and more inclined to scrap antidemocratic Senate rules and start governing.

2. *Don't Just "Keep" the House; Make It More Populist.* President Obama's State of the Union address noted that Speaker Nancy Pelosi's House has done a far better job of passing legislation than the Senate. But it wasn't easy. Blue Dogs and New Democrats erected every obstruction they could. This year they'll try to suggest that the only way to "save" the House is to run to the right, while their consultant allies will peddle the fantasy that the best response to the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* ruling allowing corporations to spend more freely on elections is to be more business-friendly. That would be disastrous. The Democrats' greatest vulnerability is not in the South, where Blue Dog seats are in play (and will in many instances be lost), but in the upper Midwest and the Northeast, where Democrats must preserve recently won seats representing hard-hit manufacturing towns and farm regions. Whether or not the White House is prepared to deliver it, the most effective message for Democratic incumbents—and challengers for the thirty-four Republican-held districts that backed Obama in 2008—is a progressive populist one that emphasizes job creation, smart farm policy and radically altering trade rules that have battered the heartland and the Northeast.

3. *Democrats Will Define Themselves in Primaries.* To hear major media tell it, the only primary fights are Republican battles between mainstream conservatives and tea party rebels. In fact, some of the most critical fights of 2010 are Democratic primaries: the California Congressional contest between incumbent Jane Harman, a frequent Republican ally on foreign policy, and progressive Marcy Winograd; a potential challenge from the right to Maryland progressive Donna Edwards; and Senate contests in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and a number of other states—perhaps even New York. Savvy groups like Progressive Democrats of America and Democracy for America and websites like Firedoglake recognize that the first step to electing progressives is to nominate them in primaries.

4. *State Races Matter.* State and local governments maintain the social safety net and pay for education. For that reason alone, the thirty-seven gubernatorial and several thousand state legislative races are important. But this year's state contests matter even more because immediately after election day Congressional district lines will be redrawn using data from the 2010 Census. In states like Ohio, Michigan, California and Florida, electing the right governor could do more to define the char-

Noted.

THE END OF THATCHERISM? **Alistair Buchanan** is an unlikely revolutionary. The head of the **Office of Gas and Electricity Markets**, the British energy watchdog, Buchanan trained as an accountant at KPMG, then worked as an analyst in the energy sector for Salomon Smith Barney before running the utilities desk at ABN Rothschild. Besides regulating the energy industry, Buchanan is also responsible for ensuring "security of supply"—making sure that there is enough capacity in the system to keep British homes warm in the winter. In early February, Buchanan warned that under the current arrangement of private power companies subject to government regulation, demand could outstrip supply by 2016; unless drastic action is taken, Britons could see average fuel bills of £2,000 a year.

The problem is that overhauling Britain's power supply—heavily dependent on aging coal power plants and way-past-peak North Sea gas and oil—would be expensive. Since the sector was privatized under **Margaret Thatcher**, the number of household energy suppliers has fallen from twenty to six—four of them foreign-owned and less likely to listen to government pleas to keep consumer prices low.

Buchanan laid out a range of options for reforming the system, from increasing competition to requiring energy suppliers to build in future capacity. But faced with the additional challenge of meeting Britain's 2020 CO_2 reduction targets, he suggested that the current free-market approach was doomed to failure. Instead, Buchanan proposed a central electricity buyer—in effect undoing the wave of privatization that remained an article of faith to both **Tony Blair** and **Gordon Brown**. Interestingly, Buchanan's call for a government-run energy supply drew guarded support even from the **Confederation of British Industry**, a business lobby group. But then, the British have lived with a single-payer healthcare system for fifty years. D.D. GUTTENPLAN

FRANKEN STANDS UP: It's fair to say that no senator knows as much about the vagaries of broadcasting as **Al Franken**. So when the former star of **Saturday Night Live** raises the alarm about the proposed merger of **NBC**, a primary supplier of broadcast and cable content, and **Comcast**, the cable TV and Internet giant, Congress, the FCC and the Obama administration ought to listen up.

When NBC and Comcast execs appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee to plead for their proposed merger, Franken let it rip. "What I know from my previous career has given me reason to be concerned—and let me phrase that very concerned—about the potential merger of Comcast and NBC/Universal," he declared. "The media are our source of entertainment. They're also the way we get our information about the world. So when the same company that produces the programs runs the pipes that bring us those programs, we have a reason to be nervous." Franken detailed discrepancies between statements made to him by Comcast's CEO and the company's attempts to thwart consumer protections. "You'll have to excuse me if I don't trust these promises," the senator said. JOHN NICHOLS

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Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

'Goldman Chief's $9 Million Bonus Seen by Some as Show of Restraint'

—Headline in the *New York Times*

(The Goldman Sachs Compensation Committee Talks to Lloyd C. Blankfein About His 2009 Bonus)

"With you in charge, we found a way
To merchandise as Triple A
Investments (solid as a rock)
Securities we knew were shlock.
Demands we put on AIG
In retrospect could prove to be
The straw that brought about, perhaps,
That corporation's near collapse
And started all this awful mess.
And yet, through chutzpah and finesse
You've steered us through the risks greed poses.
We came out whole; we smell like roses.
To lead the big dog of The Street
Nine million's simply too petite.
Nine's not enough for you. It ain't!"

"Nine's fine. I'd rather show restraint."

"But nine is surely not enough
For living well. Things could get rough.
To buy a decent co-op it'll
Most certainly be much too little.
You know (you once got sixty-eight)
That nine cannot buy real estate
That's big enough or has a view
That wouldn't just embarrass you.
The houses not beyond your means
Resemble basements at Filene's.
The yacht nine million dollars buys
Is not a yacht of any size.
And think of how The Street would snigger
If Jamie Dimon's yacht were bigger.
Here's millions more. Just nod and sign."

"I'd rather show restraint. Nine's fine."

acter of Congress in the 2010s than winning a particular US House or Senate seat.

5. *Direct Democracy Works.* The spin says Americans are in an anti-tax, cut-government frenzy. But Oregonians just voted by overwhelming margins to tax the rich and big corporations in order to preserve social services and public education. As the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center reminds us, referendums and initiatives are no longer the province of right-wing zealots. When politicians go cautious, direct democracy becomes a powerful tool. Progressives should be far more engaged with referendum fights, from California to Maine, that will focus more than ever on taxes, spending and economic policy.

6. *It's Not Just Democrats and Republicans.* If this becomes a throw-the-bums-out year, some of the most exciting runs may be against the two-party system. There will be too much talk about tea party renegades; there are far more significant—if underreported—campaigns: former Senator Lincoln Chafee's independent run for governor of Rhode Island, Green Party gubernatorial candidate Rich Whitney (who won 10.5 percent of the vote four years ago) in Illinois, and those of the Vermont Progressive Party and the Working Families Party in New York and Connecticut.

7. *Issues Are Important; Narratives Are More Important.* The top issue in 2010 is the economy. But there's a difference between chirping about green shoots and outlining a bold agenda to create family-supporting jobs and swing the policy pendulum from Wall Street toward Main Street. There can be only one party of change in an election. Democrats proved in 2006 and '08 that they could be that party merely by offering an alternative to those in power; Republicans will try to do the same in 2010. Progressives must pressure Democratic leaders and candidates, in primaries and with their general election resources and energy, to stand for something more than managing the status quo—and to recognize that talking up the Obama administration's record will not be enough.

There's going to be a great wrestling match for control of the Democratic message this year. Those who say the party should present itself as a management team that will do a better job than the Republicans on cutting domestic spending, worrying about the deficit and promoting free trade aren't writing a platform; they're penning a political suicide note. Voters are frightened and frustrated. If scared Republicans and conservative independents pack the polls while disenchanted Democrats and liberal independents stay home, it could be 1994 all over again. But if Democrats present a progressive populist message about what must be done to win not just an election but the fight for jobs, education and healthcare, they can still be the party of change, and perhaps even of hope.

JOHN NICHOLS

Torture Lawyers on Trial?

Any day now, the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) is expected to release its long-awaited report on the lawyers who crafted the Bush administration's unprecedented legal architecture for tor-

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COMMENT

ture. As with much else in Washington, the report's conclusions have already been leaked. In January Michael Isikoff and Daniel Klaidman wrote in *Newsweek* that while an earlier draft had recommended that state bars consider formal discipline of Jay Bybee and John Yoo, the principal authors of the initial "torture memo," the report has been watered down to find only the exercise of "poor judgment" and does not recommend referral for discipline. Torture has been called many things before—chief among them a "crime against humanity"—but "poor judgment"? I bet they will also find that "mistakes were made."

Meanwhile, across the ocean, a Spanish judge opened a formal criminal investigation of Bybee and Yoo in January for their role in authorizing torture tactics at the detention center at Guantánamo Bay. The judge, Baltasar Garzón, indicted Gen. Augusto Pinochet in 1998 for, among other things, authorizing torture while serving as Chile's self-appointed president, so he's shown himself unafraid to call torture something more than "poor judgment." In March 2009 Garzón took up a complaint filed against the lawyers; he has completed the initial inquiry and determined that a full formal criminal investigation is warranted.

Back at the scene of the crime, the most the Justice Department appears to be willing to do is slap Bybee's and Yoo's wrists. No criminal investigation has ever been instituted—not by attorneys general John Ashcroft, Alberto Gonzales or Michael Mukasey, all of whom are personally implicated in the department's authorization of coercive interrogation methods; nor by Eric Holder, who has opened only a limited criminal investigation of CIA interrogators who allegedly exceeded even the brutality authorized by the Justice Department lawyers but not of the lawyers who sanctioned the brutality in the first place.

It may seem odd that Spain, and not the United States, is undertaking a criminal investigation of US government officials for torture. But that's exactly what the Convention Against Torture contemplated. Countries all too frequently seek to cover up their own acts of torture, so the convention obligates signatory states to investigate credible allegations of torture, and it also recognizes that such crimes can be prosecuted anywhere. As President Reagan explained when the United States signed on to the Convention Against Torture in 1988: "The core provisions of the Convention establish a regime for international cooperation in the criminal prosecution of torturers relying on so-called 'universal jurisdiction.' Each State Party is required either to prosecute torturers who are found in its territory or to extradite them to other countries for prosecution."

In his decision authorizing the Spanish case to go forward, Judge Garzón emphasized that Spanish citizens held at Guantánamo had been victims of the policy. (In fact, Garzón had prosecuted one of those Spanish citizens for involvement in terrorism, but his conviction had been reversed on appeal because of the abuse the man suffered at Guantánamo.) Judge Garzón also stressed that US authorities had not instituted any criminal investigation themselves and in fact had not even responded to his formal request for information to Attorney General Holder in May 2009. If the United States took its legal obligations seriously, Garzón's opinion implied, there would be no need for a prosecution overseas. But treating the matter solely as an ethics issue, not a potential crime, and labeling it only "poor judgment," hardly satisfies US international obligations.

If and when the OPR report sees the light of day, the Justice Department should at a minimum be pressed to release the early version as well and to detail the process by which its conclusions were watered down. But more important, that it takes a Spanish judge to treat torture as the crime against humanity that it is while the Justice Department apparently considers it only an instance of "poor judgment" demonstrates the necessity for an inquiry independent of the very department implicated in these potential crimes. Now more than ever it is time for a blue-ribbon, bipartisan independent commission, much like the 9/11 Commission, with full subpoena power. We should not leave accountability for our own possible crimes to the Spanish.

DAVID COLE

David Cole, The Nation*'s legal affairs correspondent, is the author of* The Torture Memos: Rationalizing the Unthinkable *(New Press).*

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Uninsured Americans have arguably the highest stake in the outcome of the healthcare debate—so why are their stories absent from the national conversation? In **Tell *The Nation*: Voices of the Uninsured**, readers share their struggles to access affordable medical care and call for meaningful healthcare reform.

Although homosexuality is criminalized in eighty countries, the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Bill of 2009 is the most egregious attempt to sanction homophobia and threaten the human rights of all citizens. In **Ten Things to Oppose the Anti-Gay Legislation in Uganda**, you can find ways to fight this legislation and stand up for human rights wherever you are.

This week on **The Breakdown**: Washington editor Christopher Hayes asks, What effect will the promised troop reduction in Iraq have on defense spending? To submit your questions to *The Nation*'s weekly podcast, tweet @chrislhayes or e-mail thebreakdown@thenation.com.

In **The Expanding US War in Pakistan**, Jeremy Scahill writes that the death of three US special forces soldiers in northwest Pakistan confirms that the US military is more deeply engaged on the ground than previously acknowledged by the White House or the Pentagon.

Watch Gabriel Thompson discussing his book about working conditions for immigrants in **Working America's Most Unwanted Jobs**.

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Eric Alterman

Zinn-ophobia at NPR

When the historian and political activist Howard Zinn died recently of a heart attack at 87, NPR's *All Things Considered* ran a short obituary consisting of snippets of interviews from three people: the linguist Noam Chomsky, the civil rights leader Julian Bond and the radical right-wing provocateur David Horowitz.

Personally, while I found the poetry and audacity of Zinn's work exhilarating upon first encountering it, by the time I earned my history doctorate, it felt overly schematic, simplistic and ideologically driven. Politically, I also found myself at odds with Zinn, who supported Ralph Nader not only in 2000 but also in 2004 and even in 2008, and who recently judged Barack Obama's approach to foreign policy to be "hardly any different from a Republican." Even so, I was shocked when I heard that NPR had chosen Horowitz to assess Zinn's legacy.

Keep in mind that Chomsky and Bond were fellow left-wing activists and friends of Zinn. Quoting friends and peers is the customary practice in obituaries. Horowitz, on the other hand, does not claim to have known Zinn personally, and shares neither his goals nor views. He has no specialized knowledge of Zinn whatsoever. The single qualification that David Horowitz possessed to be included in the piece on Zinn's obituary was that he could be depended upon to be deeply critical of the deceased. And he did not disappoint. "There is absolutely nothing in Howard Zinn's intellectual output that is worthy of any kind of respect," he explained. "Zinn represents a fringe mentality which has unfortunately seduced millions of people at this point in time. So he did certainly alter the consciousness of millions of younger people for the worse." (An aside here: did no one at NPR notice the contradiction between the words "fringe mentality" and "millions of people"?)

This inclusion of an attack quote in Zinn's obituary is itself significant, since this is obviously not standard practice save perhaps for dictators and criminals. As NPR's ombudsman, Alicia Shepard, pointed out in her column dealing with the obit—a column that was inspired by more than 1,600 e-mails and over 100 phone calls that followed an "action alert" sent out by Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting—NPR did not go fishing for attacks in its recent obituaries of right-wing icons William F. Buckley, Oral Roberts or Robert Novak. One suspects that someone was nervous about quoting the radical leftist Chomsky and so sought "balance" with the radical rightist Horowitz for the purposes of political cover. No less disturbing, however, is that NPR did not quote a single historian on Zinn, given the fact that this happened to be his profession. (The *New York Times* quoted Sean Wilentz and cited Eric Foner; the *Washington Post* cited Arthur Schlesinger and quoted biographers Deb Ellis and Denis Mueller.)

I tried to find out why reporter Allison Keyes; her producer, David Sweeney; and the NPR brass thought it appropriate to include Horowitz in the obituary rather than, say, Wilentz or the historian Michael Kazin, who recently penned an extremely critical evaluation of Zinn's *oeuvre* for the democratic socialist publication *Dissent*. But the station declined to make anyone available. I did receive a statement in which "NPR News Management" averred that while Horowitz's quote was "harsh in tone…that doesn't undermine the legitimacy of using his point of view," despite its "missing supporting evidence."

Hello? What exactly is this "legitimate" point of view? As everyone at NPR must surely be aware, for the past thirty or so years, Horowitz has made a career exclusively devoted to attacking what he deems to be the various crimes against humanity generally, and David Horowitz personally, committed by virtually every liberal or leftist on the planet. According to the account he published on his website, he told Keyes that Zinn was responsible for "helping Stalin" to "slaughter" and "enslave" Eastern Europe; that he "never flagged in his political commitment to freedom's enemies"; and that he "supported every enemy of the United States in every war…including the Islamic Nazis whose first agenda is to finish the job that Hitler started."

Did no alarm bells go off at NPR after hearing this? Does NPR news management really believe these views to be deserving of airing on its network? In an obituary? Or is it possible that the reason Horowitz's view of Zinn was "missing supporting evidence" is that his "point of view" on Zinn is—to put it mildly—crazy?

The use of David Horowitz to assess the life's work of Howard Zinn on the occasion of his death would be indefensible in any serious news organization, but it is particularly painful to see in one that is so admired by other journalists and trusted by so many millions of listeners to uphold what remains of the standards of honesty, decency and respect for complexity in news coverage. It is no secret that NPR, like PBS, has felt itself to be under siege from the likes of Horowitz and other right-wing culture warriors for decades. The station has taken steps to try to appease these critics by including a bevy of conservative pundits and representing the views of the far-right viewpoint in its reporting whenever possible. In the case of its Middle East reporting, a particular target of neocons and self-appointed censors, it has gone so far as to hire an independent evaluator of its work. But in the case of Horowitz and Zinn, its reporters and producers have behaved so contrary to the rules of both good journalism and fundamental fairness that it has seriously compromised the reputation that hundreds of people have labored mightily (and for not much pay, I might add) to create. Let's hope that this episode—and the reaction it engendered—stands as a wake-up call for everyone concerned. One Fox News is more than enough! ■

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Naomi Klein

Haiti: A Creditor, Not a Debtor

If we are to believe the G-7 finance ministers, Haiti is on its way to getting something it has deserved for a very long time: full "forgiveness" of its foreign debt. In Port-au-Prince, Haitian economist Camille Chalmers has been watching these developments with cautious optimism. Debt cancellation is a good start, he told Al Jazeera English, but "It's time to go much further. We have to talk about reparations and restitution for the devastating consequences of debt." In this telling, the whole idea that Haiti is a debtor needs to be abandoned. Haiti, he argues, is a creditor—and it is we, in the West, who are deeply in arrears.

Our debt to Haiti stems from four main sources: slavery, the US occupation, dictatorship and climate change. These claims are not fantastical, nor are they merely rhetorical. They rest on multiple violations of legal norms and agreements. Here, far too briefly, are highlights of the Haiti case.

§ *The Slavery Debt*. When Haitians won their independence from France in 1804, they would have had every right to claim reparations from the powers that had profited from three centuries of stolen labor. France, however, was convinced that it was Haitians who had stolen the property of slave owners by refusing to work for free. So in 1825, with a flotilla of war ships stationed off the Haitian coast threatening to re-enslave the former colony, King Charles X came to collect: 90 million gold francs—ten times Haiti's annual revenue at the time. With no way to refuse, and no way to pay, the young nation was shackled to a debt that would take 122 years to pay off.

In 2003, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, facing a crippling economic embargo, announced that Haiti would sue the French government over that long-ago heist. "Our argument," Aristide's former lawyer Ira Kurzban told me, "was that the contract was an invalid agreement because it was based on the threat of re-enslavement at a time when the international community regarded slavery as an evil." The French government was sufficiently concerned that it sent a mediator to Port-au-Prince to keep the case out of court. In the end, however, its problem was eliminated: while trial preparations were under way, Aristide was toppled from power. The lawsuit disappeared, but for many Haitians the reparations claim lives on.

§ *The Dictatorship Debt*. From 1957 to 1986, Haiti was ruled by the defiantly kleptocratic Duvalier regime. Unlike the French debt, the case against the Duvaliers made it into several courts, which traced Haitian funds to an elaborate network of Swiss bank accounts and lavish properties. In 1988 Kurzban won a landmark suit against Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier when a US District Court in Miami found that the deposed ruler had "misappropriated more than $504,000,000 from public monies."

Haitians, of course, are still waiting for their payback—but that was only the beginning of their losses. For more than two decades, the country's creditors insisted that Haitians honor the huge debts incurred by the Duvaliers, estimated at $844 million, much of it owed to institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. In debt service alone, Haitians have paid out tens of millions every year.

Was it legal for foreign lenders to collect on the Duvalier debts when so much of it was never spent in Haiti? Very likely not. As Cephas Lumina, the United Nations Independent Expert on foreign debt, put it to me, "the case of Haiti is one of the best examples of odious debt in the world. On that basis alone the debt should be unconditionally canceled."

But even if Haiti does see full debt cancellation (a big if), that does not extinguish its right to be compensated for illegal debts already collected.

§ *The Climate Debt*. Championed by several developing countries at the climate summit in Copenhagen, the case for climate debt is straightforward. Wealthy countries that have so spectacularly failed to address the climate crisis they caused owe a debt to the developing countries that have done little to cause the crisis but are disproportionately facing its effects. In short: the polluter pays. Haiti has a particularly compelling claim. Its contribution to climate change has been negligible; Haiti's per capita CO_2 emissions are just 1 percent of US emissions. Yet Haiti is among the hardest hit countries—according to one index, only Somalia is more vulnerable to climate change.

Haiti's vulnerability to climate change is not only—or even mostly—because of geography. Yes, it faces increasingly heavy storms. But it is Haiti's weak infrastructure that turns challenges into disasters and disasters into full-fledged catastrophes. The earthquake, though not linked to climate change, is a prime example. And this is where all those illegal debt payments may yet extract their most devastating cost. Each payment to a foreign creditor was money not spent on a road, a school, an electrical line. And that same illegitimate debt empowered the IMF and World Bank to attach onerous conditions to each new loan, requiring Haiti to deregulate its economy and slash its public sector still further. Failure to comply was met with a punishing aid embargo from 2001 to '04, the death knell to Haiti's public sphere.

This history needs to be confronted now, because it threatens to repeat itself. Haiti's creditors are already using the desperate need for earthquake aid to push for a fivefold increase in garment-sector production, some of the most exploitative jobs in the country. Haitians have no status in these talks, because they are regarded as passive recipients of aid, not full and dignified participants in a process of redress and restitution.

A reckoning with the debts the world owes to Haiti would radically change this poisonous dynamic. This is where the real road to repair begins: by recognizing the right of Haitians to reparations. ■

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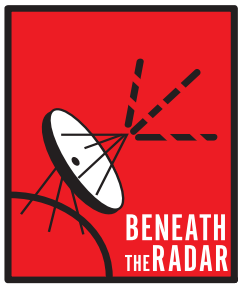
Gary Younge

Dropping in on the Tea Party

Kentucky

It's hard to imagine how a town like Leitchfield (population: 6,139) in central Kentucky could survive without government. Sitting between Nolin and Rough River Lakes, it's on the way to nowhere in particular, so no private interest would build a road to it. In surrounding Grayson County more than one in five people and one in three children is on food stamps, so no one would feed it. It does not produce enough wealth to sustain itself. Unemployment, long in double figures, stands at 16 percent. One in five lives below the poverty line; the median income is $35,011. Were it not for the redistributive effects of taxation, its residents would literally go nowhere and many would be incredibly hungry when they got there.

But when Republican Senate primary hopeful Rand Paul arrived in town in December to argue that the spread of government represents America's greatest threat, he had an eager audience. Paul, the son of Congressman Ron Paul, who attracted a huge libertarian following during the last presidential election, was the insurgent tea party candidate in May's primary. Now he's the front-runner. According to a Rasmussen poll he leads both potential Democratic rivals.



He now wears the glass slipper that is Sarah Palin's endorsement.

Just when you thought the Republican Party could not get more right wing, along came the tea party movement—people who fault George W. Bush for not being conservative enough. The temptation of liberals to deride this tendency has, for some, been irresistible. There are mad hatters here, for sure. According to a recent Daily Kos poll of self-identified Republicans, 36 percent believe Barack Obama was not born in the United States, almost a third think he is a racist who hates white people and almost a third believe contraceptives should be banned.

But for all the derision heaped upon it, the tea party movement that began with people in period costume has become a serious electoral force. Rasmussen polls in December revealed that if the tea party were an actual party it would beat the Republicans; among voters not affiliated with either major party it was the most popular. As Paul's candidacy shows, these hypotheticals are becoming actuals. A year ago "moderate" Florida Governor Charlie Crist led unknown ultraconservative Marco Rubio 57 to 4. Then Crist embraced Obama and his stimulus package. Now Rubio is leading by 12 points and is favored to trounce his prospective Democratic challenger. A few days before I met Paul, I attended a tea party rally in Little Rock, Arkansas: it was 300-strong and standing room only. All the Senate candidates who plan to challenge Democrat Blanche Lincoln attended to kiss the movement's ring.

At this stage the tea party's influence can be exaggerated. A group of people brought together by things they don't like can easily splinter. The recent Tea Party Convention sparked as much division as unity, and a large share of its attendees were not participants but reporters. Still, it should not be underestimated.

Blasting bank bailouts and NAFTA, the tea partyers espouse a brand of populism that resonates in the absence of coherent analysis of America's economic decline coming from progressives and the administration. These may be people who voted for Bush twice, but they are not turning out for the same reasons as they did before. This time, their agenda is more economic than social. In more than an hour neither Paul nor any of the thirty-five audience members at Leitchfield's town hall meeting mentioned abortion, gay marriage, stem cell research, creationism or religion in schools. "Remember when one of Clinton's aides said, 'It's the economy, stupid'?" Paul asked me afterward. "It still is the economy.… I'm not running for preacher. I'm running for office."

The movement is almost exclusively white. The fact that its agenda is informed by issues of race and its ranks infected with racism is undeniable, but the driving force behind it is clearly much more complicated. If Condoleezza Rice were president they would probably love her. And if Obama were half as liberal as his base thinks he is, he would spark opposition regardless of his race.

While some have drawn an equivalence between the tea partyers and Obama voters, the comparison is more asymmetrical. Obama launched a campaign that aspired to become a movement; the tea partyers have created a movement that is trying to gain electoral expression. The former found its focus via a candidate; the latter have no obvious champion. It's not even clear they're looking for one. (Most love Palin, but the movement would survive quite well without her.)

This movement's leadership is in the media. In the absence of Republican leadership it has been stoked by Fox News and talk-radio. Every Tuesday at a nonalcoholic Bar None in Lexington, a 9/12 Project group meets. This is Fox presenter Glenn Beck's initiative, aimed at returning America to the values it embraced the day after 9/11—not the outpouring of gratitude toward government workers, like firefighters and police but the flag-waving patriotic and religious unity that ostensibly engulfed the nation. Fourteen showed up the night I was there. A straw poll revealed that they blamed the entire establishment, not Obama alone, for leading America in the wrong direction. Half believed Obama is a Muslim, just one thought he's a Christian and the vast majority thought he was a communist, socialist and Marxist. None believed he was born in America; most said they did not know.

With words that could have come from a liberal in the run-up to the Iraq War, Abigail Billings chided the media for their incompetence: They are "not doing any research. They're not asking any questions. They're not reporting any longer. They're now opinionated talk-shows. They're no longer offering factual news coverage." Billings watches Fox News. And so does everyone else. ■

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THE MEDIA-LOBBYING COMPLEX

SEBASTIAN JONES

The talking heads of cable news are leading double lives as paid lobbyists for corporations.

President Obama spent most of December 4 touring Allentown, Pennsylvania, meeting with local workers and discussing the economic crisis. A few hours later, the state's former governor, Tom Ridge, was on MSNBC's *Hardball With Chris Matthews*, offering up his own recovery plan. There were "modest things" the White House might try, like cutting taxes or opening up credit for small businesses, but the real answer was for the president to "take his green agenda and blow it out of the box." The first step, Ridge explained, was to "create nuclear power plants." Combined with some waste coal and natural gas extraction, you would have an "innovation setter" that would "create jobs, create exports."

As Ridge counseled the administration to "put that package together," he sure seemed like an objective commentator. But what viewers weren't told was that since 2005, Ridge has pocketed $530,659 in executive compensation for serving on the board of Exelon, the nation's largest nuclear power company. As of March 2009, he also held an estimated $248,299 in Exelon stock, according to SEC filings.

Moments earlier, retired general and "NBC Military Analyst" Barry McCaffrey told viewers that the war in Afghanistan would require an additional "three- to ten-year effort" and "a lot of money." Unmentioned was the fact that DynCorp paid McCaffrey $182,309 in 2009 alone. The government had just granted DynCorp a five-year deal worth an estimated $5.9 billion to aid American forces in Afghanistan. The first year is locked in at $644 million, but the additional four options are subject to renewal, contingent on military needs and political realities.

In a single hour, two men with blatant, undisclosed conflicts of interest had appeared on MSNBC. The question is, was this an isolated oversight or business as usual? Evidence points to the latter. In 2003 *The Nation* exposed McCaffrey's financial ties to military contractors he had promoted on-air on several cable networks; in 2008 David Barstow wrote a Pulitzer Prize–winning series for the *New York Times* about the Pentagon's use of former military officers—many lobbying or consulting for military contractors—to get their talking points on television in exchange for access to decision-makers; and in 2009 bloggers uncovered how ex-*Newsweek* writer Richard Wolffe had guest-hosted *Countdown With Keith Olbermann* while working at a large PR firm specializing in "strategies for managing corporate reputation."

These incidents represent only a fraction of the covert corporate influence peddling on cable news, a four-month investigation by *The Nation* has found. Since 2007 at least seventy-five registered lobbyists, public relations representatives and corporate officials—people paid by companies and trade groups to manage their public image and promote their financial and political interests—have appeared on MSNBC, Fox News, CNN, CNBC and Fox Business Network with no disclosure of the corporate interests that had paid them. Many have been regulars on more than one of the cable networks, turning in dozens—and in some cases hundreds—of appearances.

For lobbyists, PR firms and corporate officials, going on cable television is a chance to promote clients and their interests on the most widely cited source of news in the United States. These appearances also generate good will and access to major players inside the Democratic and Republican parties. For their part, the cable networks, eager to fill time and afraid of upsetting the political elite, have often looked the other way. At times, the networks have even disregarded their own written ethics guidelines. Just about everyone involved is heavily invested in maintaining the current system, with the exception of the viewer.

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While lobbyists and PR flacks have long tried to spin the press, the launch of Fox News and MSNBC in 1996 and the Clinton impeachment saga that followed helped create the caldron of twenty-four-hour political analysis that so many influence peddlers call home. Since then, guests with serious conflicts of interest have popped up with alarming regularity on every network. Just examine their presence in coverage of the economic crash and the healthcare reform debate, two recent issues that have engendered massive cable coverage.

As the recession slammed the country in late 2008 and government bailouts followed, lobbyists and PR flacks took to the air with troubling regularity, advocating on behalf of clients and their interests while masquerading as neutral analysts. One was Bernard Whitman, president of Whitman Insight Strategies, a communications firm that specializes in helping "guide successful lobbying, communications and information campaigns through targeted research." Whitman's clients have included lobbying firms like BGR Group and marketing/PR firms like Ogilvy & Mather, which in turn have numerous corporate clients with a vested interest in shaping federal policies. Whitman is a veteran of the Clinton era and when making television appearances continues to be identified for work he did almost a decade earlier.

According to its website, Whitman Insight Strategies has worked for AIG to "develop, test, launch, and enhance their consumer brand," and continues to assist the insurance giant "as it responds to ongoing marketplace developments." Whitman Strategies has also posted more than 100 clips of Bernard Whitman's television appearances on a YouTube account. During a September 18, 2008, Fox News appearance to discuss Sarah Palin, Whitman proceeded to lambaste John McCain for proposing to "let AIG fail," saying that this demonstrated "just how little he understands the global economy today."

On March 25, 2009, in the midst of a scandal over AIG's executive bonuses, Whitman appeared on Fox News again. "The American people were understandably outraged about AIG," he began. "Having said that, we need to move beyond anger, frustration and hysteria to really get down to the brass tacks of solving this economy," he advised the public. In neither instance was Whitman's ongoing work for AIG mentioned.

Another person with AIG ties is Ron Christie, now at the helm of his own consultancy. While working at Republican-leaning firm DC Navigators, now Navigators Global, from 2006 through September 2008, Christie was registered to lobby on behalf of the insurance giant, lobbying filings show. During that period, AIG shelled out $590,000 to DC Navigators.

On September 18, 2008, Christie went on *Hardball* to discuss the government's response to AIG's near implosion days earlier. He was introduced only as a Republican strategist. As Chris Matthews mocked a presidential press conference on the financial crisis held earlier that day, Christie interrupted to say President Bush was "smart to have gotten a former person from Goldman Sachs who is a very bright man, who understands the markets and liquidity." Christie was referring to Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, who had once been the chair and CEO of Goldman Sachs and who played a pivotal role in the AIG bailout. "This is not a political sideshow. This is putting the right person in his administration to deal with this crisis," Christie said.

Bigger players were on AIG's payroll, too: shortly after receiving its first bailout, in 2008, AIG hired PR mega-firm Burson-Marsteller to handle "controversial issues." In April 2009, B-M hired former White House press secretary Dana Perino, already an established TV pundit. A month later she was picked up as a contributor to Fox News, where she has had occasion to discuss the economic meltdown.

This past July, for example, Perino joined a roundtable on Fox Business Network's *Money for Breakfast*, which briefly noted her affiliation with B-M but neglected to mention its link to AIG. When a fellow guest commented that AIG had been "highly regulated" before the crash, Perino pounced, suggesting that current financial reform efforts demonstrate how "Washington has a tendency to overreact in a crisis." When Gary Kalman of USPIRG suggested that regulations had, in fact, been rolled back for decades, Perino scoffed, "I don't think there are many business people who would actually agree with that."

(Whitman, Christie and Perino did not return requests for comment.)

As the recession hit the country, lobbyists and PR flacks took to the air, advocating for their clients while masquerading as neutral analysts.

Another conflict of interest plagued the televised debate over how to reform healthcare. Terry Holt, once a spokesman for the Republican National Committee and for House minority leader John Boehner, has also been, on and off since 2003, a lobbyist for the health insurance trade group America's Health Insurance Plans. When he and three other Republican operatives formed communications and lobbying firm HDMK in 2007, one of their first clients was AHIP.

On March 5, 2009, Holt, introduced simply as a Republican, told MSNBC anchor David Shuster that the Obama administration was "going to, you know, cut Medicare benefits for something like 11 million seniors to start this big healthcare reform project." By October AHIP was running ads in several states against the health reform bill that asked, "Is it right to ask 10 million seniors on Medicare Advantage for more than their fair share?"

Holt also made several appearances to discuss healthcare policy on CNN, where his affiliation with insurers was cited on several occasions, starting in September, though not dur-

Sebastian Jones, a former Nation *intern, is a freelance writer based in New York City.*

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ing a September 14 appearance on *The Situation Room*, when Holt discussed healthcare reform efforts. The network subsequently experienced a small scandal in October when blogger Greg Sargent revealed that political analyst Alex Castellanos, a frequent commentator on CNN, had been helping craft attack ads for AHIP—including the one that referred to the "10 million seniors" losing Medicare benefits—while discussing healthcare policy on air, identified only as a Republican strategist.

When I interviewed Holt recently, he told me that there was one occasion when his work for AHIP was not mentioned on CNN, and that afterward, a producer contacted him to discuss his work for the trade group. Holt said that he believes that cable appearances "operate best with maximum transparency."

"When you're addressing the public, it's a reasonable expectation that they be fully aware of your perspective—where you're coming from—and I see my obligation as informing the news organization that's asking me to appear or to comment about my standing and letting them be the judge," he said.

Putting strategists on television is 'a lot cheaper than sending a correspondent to Afghanistan,' says former CNN host Aaron Brown.

Democratic lobbyists and corporate consultants have also made appearances to discuss health reform with no reference to their pharmaceutical or insurance company clients. On September 24, 2009, Dick Gephardt appeared on MSNBC's *Morning Meeting*, where he labeled the public option "not essential." Gephardt was asked by host Dylan Ratigan to discuss healthcare reform in light of his experience as a Congressman during the Clinton effort in 1993 and now simply as "an observer through this process." There was no mention of his work advising insurance and pharmaceutical interests through his lobbying firm Gephardt Government Affairs, nor any mention that Gephardt is a lobbyist for NBC/Universal.

Likewise, Tom Daschle dropped by MSNBC on May 12 and July 2, 2009, and NBC's *Meet the Press* on August 16, 2009. At each appearance he discussed healthcare reform with no mention of his work on behalf of lobbying firm Alston & Bird, which advises insurer UnitedHealth Group. Only during a December 8 appearance on MSNBC's *Dr. Nancy* was Daschle finally confronted, albeit with kid gloves, about how his simultaneous work for lobbying firms on behalf of health insurers and meetings with administration officials on healthcare reform appeared to be at odds. "I certainly want to be appreciative of perception, so we're going to take great care in how we go forward," Daschle promised. A month later, on January 11, the former Senate majority leader returned to MSNBC to discuss healthcare with Andrea Mitchell. In the nearly ten-minute interview, his insurance work went unmentioned.

As of this writing, healthcare and financial reform legislation have largely stalled. And although it would be foolish to argue that Daschle's TV appearances sank the public option or that Dana Perino's punditry fatally wounded a proposed Consumer Financial Protection Agency, there can be no doubt that there is a cumulative effect from hundreds of appearances by dozens of unidentified lobbyists and influence peddlers that helps to drive press coverage and public opinion.

Janine Wedel, an anthropologist in the School of Public Policy at George Mason University and author of the new book *Shadow Elite*, told me in a recent interview that while these influence peddlers are not necessarily unethical, they "elude accountability to governments, shareholders and voters—and threaten democracy."

"When there's a whole host of pundits on the airwaves touting the same agenda at the same time, you get a cumulative effect that shapes public opinion toward their agenda," she said.

Frequent television news commentators are also often given access to policy-makers, who may find that they are meeting with not just a TV pundit but also a paid lobbyist. This past March, for example, the White House held an exclusive "communications message meeting" for high-profile Democratic strategists with top presidential aide David Axelrod. Of the eighteen attendees, almost all television regulars, a third were lobbyists or public relations flacks, such as Kelly Bingel, a lobbyist for AHIP and a partner at mega-firm Mehlman Vogel Castagnetti, and Rich Masters, a partner at PR/lobbying outfit Qorvis Communications, where he works on behalf of trade group Pharmaceutical Researchers and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

Ultimately, no matter how often or how cleverly lobbyists and PR operatives have used cable news appearances to their business advantage, it is hard to fault them for the practice. In many cases, they have made no attempt to hide their work for corporate clients; some, like Terry Holt, have gone out of their way to inform producers and bookers of the work they're doing on behalf of clients.

This leaves final responsibility in the hands of the cable news networks that invite lobbyists and corporate flacks on the air and fail to identify their affiliations. This past fall Aaron Brown, host of CNN's *NewsNight* from 2001 until 2005, when the network pushed him out, and currently a professor of journalism at Arizona State University, told me that he didn't think the problem was a lack of standards but a lack of enforcement. Bookers—"young, inexperienced people under a lot of pressure"—are unlikely to ask guests about potential conflicts of interest. "I think they're often derelict in vetting," says Brown.

For Brown, though, the lack of disclosure is symptomatic of larger problems in cable journalism, rooted in the shift to putting numerous analysts and strategists on television as an easy, inexpensive way to fill time. It's "a lot cheaper than sending a correspondent to Afghanistan," he says.

"What I find unconscionable about this is that it's not like a

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Dr. Scott E. Page is Collegiate Professor of Political Science, Complex Systems, and Economics at the University of Michigan. He received his Ph.D. in Managerial Economics and Decision Sciences from Northwestern University. An external faculty member of the Santa Fe Institute, Professor Page is the coauthor of *Complex Adaptive Systems: An Introduction to Computational Models of Social Life*.

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struggling newspaper is looking for an inexpensive way to do journalism because they have no money. These are highly successful profit centers for the corporations that they're spawned from," Brown said.

Jeff Cohen, who helped found the nonprofit group Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), echoes some of Brown's critiques. Cohen worked for MSNBC for several months in 2002 and published a book in 2006, *Cable News Confidential*, about the experience. When I asked him why men like Gephardt and McCaffrey could go on television with no reference to their consulting and lobbying, Cohen explained that, based on his experience at MSNBC, "these regulars get introduced the way they want to be introduced.

"This is the key: Gephardt will always be the former majority leader of the House. Period.… These guys know they won't be identified by what they do now but instead by what their position was years or decades ago," Cohen said.

Some of this has changed in recent months, with CNN starting to identify the industries some analysts work for. For its part, Fox News has long identified the lobbying or PR firms of some—though not all—guests, but the network does not give viewers any information about the kinds of clients these firms represent. (CNN would not return calls, and Fox News did not provide comment.)

Then there's MSNBC, the cable network with the most egregious instances of airing guests with conflicts of interest. Only on MSNBC did Todd Boulanger, a Jack Abramoff–connected lobbyist working for Cassidy and Associates, go on a TV rehabilitation tour with no identification of his work, all while he was under investigation for corruption (he pleaded guilty in January 2009). Only on MSNBC was a prime-time program, *Countdown*, hosted by public relations operative Richard Wolffe and later by a pharmaceutical company consultant, former Governor Howard Dean, with no mention of the outside work either man was engaged in. And MSNBC has yet to introduce DynCorp's Barry McCaffrey as anything but a "military analyst."

When I spoke with MSNBC in mid-January, the network seemed eager to prove it is fixing the problem. David McCormick, the ombudsman for NBC News, deals with questions about standards and practices at MSNBC. (Both organizations use the same policies-and-guidelines booklet, which McCormick helped develop; CNBC has more stringent disclosure requirements as a result of SEC rules.) McCormick told me that the issue of conflict of interest has been on his mind of late. He said that MSNBC intended to contact its guests and brief them on its disclosure policies, adding that "trust is a huge part of the business" and that the network relies on guests "to let us know of any potential conflicts."

"We've been talking to our folks for a number of years about the importance of transparency and letting the viewers in on where folks—it could be contributors, analysts or experts that we don't pay—fit into the mosaic of a story," said McCormick. "Are we perfect about it? No."

In fact, potential conflicts of interest have been a topic of concern for more than a decade. An October 1998 copy of the "NBC News Policies and Guidelines" devotes an entire chapter to "Guests/Analysts/Experts/Advocates." It states:

> It is essential that our viewers understand the particular perspective of all guests, analysts and experts (whether paid or not) who appear on our programs.…
>
> Our viewers need all relevant information so they can come to their own conclusions regarding the topic at hand. It is not enough to say: "John Doe of XYZ Foundation."…Likewise, it may not be enough to say Jane Doe, NBC consultant or analyst.… Disclosure may be made in copy or visually. But it must be done in a clear manner.

McCormick told me that financial conflicts of interest were "in the same category as ideological or political interests," but also suggested that MSNBC's practice of posting information about guests on its website was an adequate way to air potential conflicts of interest. McCormick emphasized that this reform was "a work in progress."

A few days later, on January 22, I happened to catch MSNBC's *Morning Joe*. Mark Penn, identified only as a Clinton administration pollster and Democratic strategist, was suggesting that the Obama administration put healthcare reform on ice. Unmentioned: Penn's role as worldwide CEO of Burson-Marsteller, which has an entire healthcare division devoted to helping clients like Eli Lilly and Pfizer "create and manage perceptions that deliver positive business results."

At times, it begins to seem as though the problem is beyond fixing, an unfortunate but unavoidable reality of our media and political landscape, in which the lines between public service and corporate advancement are so blurred. It is clear that the pressure applied on the networks so far has not resulted in systemic change. Even in the aftermath of increasing scrutiny—particularly after David Barstow's Pulitzer Prize–winning exposés in the *Times*—General McCaffrey continues to appear on television without any caveats about his work for military contractors. As *Salon* blogger Glenn Greenwald has observed, none of the networks involved in the scandal have ever bothered to address Barstow's findings on air, and they noticeably omitted Barstow's name from coverage of the 2009 Pulitzers. "It's almost like a mysterious black hole that this issue, which is enormous, is getting no attention from the offenders themselves," the Society for Professional Journalists' ethics committee chair Andy Schotz told me recently.

Jay Rosen, a media critic and journalism professor at New York University, has a different take. "More disclosure is good—I'm certainly in favor of that—but why are these people on at all?" asks Rosen. "They have views and can manufacture opinions around any event at any time."

Rosen echoes something Brown mentioned to me. Watching cable news cover the 2008 election with more analysts crammed at one table than ever before—as if to ask, "How many people can we put on the set at one time?"—Brown said he was "amazed how little they had to offer." He went on, "We live in a time where there are no shortages of opinions and an incredible deficit of facts." ■

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‘We Won’t Bow Down’

The joy and community found in Mardi Gras offer an antidote to defeatism and despair.

by REBECCA SOLNIT

One day last July I sat next to the Salvadoran-American musician David Molina on a long bus ride. He showed me his pictures of Carnival in Paucartambo in the Peruvian Andes, and when he was done I showed him mine of Mardi Gras in New Orleans. The indigenous town at nearly 10,000 feet holds a raucous celebration with fireworks, costumes, people throwing stuff, playing with fire, kidnapping strangers and keeping them hostage at feasts, drinking in quantity, kids staying up into the small hours—the rules are all broken, and the first rule is the one of shyness and separation. New Orleans is about as different from Paucartambo as could be, starting with the fact that parts of it are below sea level, but it too keeps alive the old tradition of Carnival—not just on Mardi Gras, the last day of Carnival season, before Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, but all through the weeks from Twelfth Night, January 5, when it begins. What happens in Carnival is complicated. But let me send another float through this parade of ideas first.

Six years ago I wrote a book about hope. A few years later I went to look at the worst things that happen to people and found some more hope in the resilience, the inventiveness, the bravery and occasionally the long-term subversion with which people respond. It culminated in another fairly hopeful book, based on the surprising evidence of what actually happens in disaster. Civil society happens, and sometimes joy in that society; institutional failure often also transpires. Sometimes a power struggle to re-establish the status quo follows, and sometimes the status quo wins, sometimes it doesn’t. Which is to say, sometimes we win, though that’s far from inevitable. This is grounds to be hopeful. Now, being hopeful seems to me like it’s preferable to being hopeless, but for six years I’ve been talking about these books in public. This means I’ve also been running into people at readings, talks and interviews who are furiously attached to hopelessness, to narratives of despair and decline, to belief in an omniscient them who always wins and a feeble us who always loses. To keep hold of this complex, they have to skew the evidence, and they do. They cherry-pick. They turn complex facts into simple stories. They constitute a significant sector of the left.

I don’t believe that they represent the whole left; rather, it seems the self-appointed spokespeople for the left are both more privileged than the left as such and more attached to defeat. Defeat for the privileged means cynicism and an excuse for doing little or nothing; defeat for the oppressed means surrender to hideous or fatal conditions, which might be why hope has of late come from people like the Zapatistas, the indigenous campesinos of Mexico’s poorest state, or the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the incredible undocumented-immigrant farmworkers organization that forced Taco Bell and then McDonald’s into negotiations. Hope, in the myth of Pandora’s box, is what is left behind after everything else has fled; those who hang on to everything else seem to give up or overlook hope. So they often say we always lose.

ALEX BRANDON/AP

A member of the Krewe of Zulu holds one of their famous coconuts painted with the US flag.

“Always” is the key word here, because many leftists are also smitten with sweeping generalizations—and they are oddly willing to accept generalizations that everything is awful, while if you point out that not everything is awful they will believe you’ve said everything is wonderful and try to shoot that down. If you generalized about a race or a gender, they’d be all over you, but they’ll turn history into a one-sided parade straight to the dogs and feel like they’re facing the facts. Attachment to despair and defeatism is often portrayed as realism, though it flies in the face of our history, in which, though corporations have continued their T-Rex march, a host of liberations—from colonialism and age-old discriminations—have proceeded apace, so much so that our society is pretty unrecognizable from a 1965 perspective, wilder than anything in the science fiction of the time in terms of changed roles for women, people of color and unstraight people, changed ideas about nature, religion, power, justice and more. And corporate capital has been far from the only force at work in this era that has seen the WTO diminished into near irrelevance, the FTAA defeated and NAFTA almost universally reviled.

I think of these naysayers as the Eeyore chorus, after the

Rebecca Solnit is the author of twelve books, including A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster *and* Hope in the Dark, *as well as a regular contributor to Tomdispatch.com.*

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dismal donkey in *Winnie-the-Pooh*, and I run into them a lot. It may be that for those coming from the mainstream to the left the chance to tell the underside of the official version—that it's corrupt and destructive—seems like the work at hand. I come from the left, and my task is clearly telling the other, overlooked histories of hope, popular power, subversion and possibility. Which elicits a lot of grumbling from Eeyore's many reps.

I got a dose of one of the really common axioms of defeat from a well-spoken young academic woman early on my book tour. I'd been comparing disaster to Carnival in its disruptiveness and subversion of everyday roles. With some irritation at my invitation to consider a more open world, she raised the old bugbear that Carnival is not subversive because it reconciles people to the status quo. (It's a dimming-down of Mikhail Bakhtin's famous writings on Carnival in his book on Rabelais.) First of all, what is Carnival? I've only been to one, a couple of times, but it was in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and it consisted of a host of phenomena tending in all kinds of political directions. Mardi Gras and Carnival are not synonymous; the latter is a weeks-long season from Twelfth Night in January to the last day before Lent, during which krewes put on public parades and private balls. Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday, is that last day. Rex is the central parade of Mardi Gras, led by the business elite of the town, and only grudgingly integrated after being forced to do so by the city (some of the other oligarchical Carnival krewes, Comus and Momus, just stopped parading rather than integrate). The city sponsors and organizes none of Mardi Gras; it just prevents unintegrated krewes from marching, polices a lot and sweeps up the tons of debris afterward.

So there's Rex, but it has to wait for Zulu, which is a parody of Rex and of stereotypes of African-Americans—it features the city's black elite in grass skirts and leopardskin with spears and jungle floats. Zulu's procession goes before Rex and traditionally, I'm told, likes to keep Rex waiting. Louis Armstrong was once the king of Zulu—the Carnival krewes create their own royalty—and once said to the king of England, "This one's for you, Rex," when he sang "(I'll Be Glad When You're Dead) You Rascal You." The spirit of Carnival let a son of the New Orleans streets spit in a king's eye. More recently, a queen of Zulu, Desirée Rogers, became Obama's social secretary.

Zulu, like a lot of the African-American krewes, isn't just an organization that puts on a parade. It's an outgrowth of the social aid and pleasure clubs that were once widespread in the South, and the clubs are a version of the benevolent societies that were once a huge social force for the working class of the United States. My friend Eric Laursen has written about them. He says:

> Fraternal orders (which also included women's organizations) were an enormous social force among American working people in the first half of the 20th Century—nearly as significant as labor unions. Also known as mutual aid societies, their defining features were [what David T. Beito described as] "an autonomous system of lodges, a democratic form of internal government, a ritual, and the provision of mutual aid for members and their families."… The legions who joined the fraternal orders were not anarchists. The orders tended to be organized in a rigidly hierarchical way, and their leaders loved to underscore their Americanism and denounce radicals and revolutionaries. But perhaps they protested a bit too much. Anarchists have always projected mutual aid as the basic organizing principle of a non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian society. And despite their many defects, the fraternal orders carried out perhaps the most ambitious experiment in mutual aid in US history—a project that cut across classes and gave immigrants and people of color a tool for advancing themselves when government and capitalist business structures were both geared to keep them in their place. The orders provided a powerful demonstration that mutual aid could serve as an alternative method for organizing a complex modern society.

African-American social aid and pleasure clubs grew out of the benevolent societies of the nineteenth century, which, as Laursen points out, provided funerals, medical coverage and accident and unemployment insurance to their members. Put that way, they sound as dreary as the corporations I write checks to for my healthcare and other insurances, but they were vibrant organizations that provided a real sense of membership. You weren't giving your money to the faceless bureaucracy and hoping for something back; you were taking care of your brethren, who would take care of you. Put another way, they provided tangible necessities (social aid) when things went wrong but intangible ones (social pleasure) when they went right. Pretty different from your HMO—and pretty cool. Zulu's website proclaims that "during the Christmas season, the organization gives Christmas baskets to needy families, participates in the Adopt-a-School program [where one elementary school was named after a deceased member, Morris F.X. Jeff Sr.], contributes to the Southern University Scholarship Fund and donates funds and time to other community organizations."

Carnival let a son of the streets spit in a king's eye. More recently, a queen of Zulu, Desirée Rogers, became Obama's social secretary.

In one sense Carnival keeps the mutual aid societies of New Orleans alive, but in another sense the societies keep Carnival alive. But Mardi Gras is one day, and the big downtown parades are only one aspect of a festival that, like most Carnivals, lasts for weeks. There are a lot of other organizations parading, from Muses, the women's krewe, which is sort of feminist and sort of raunchy, to informal things like Julu, the klezmer-inspired takeoff on Zulu my friend Rebecca Snedeker belongs to. I joined Julu in 2008, and we roamed the

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streets and stopped off for drinks and ducked out to see other parades. There are about nine gay krewes with their own balls, and there's an AIDS ritual involving cremation ashes on the day of celebration, one day before Ash Wednesday.

The Mardi Gras Indians, who date back to the 1880s, are small bands of African-American men in flamboyant, massive beaded costumes modeled after American Indian regalia. They are said to honor the relationship between slaves and American Indians in an earlier time, and their beadwork is really more Yoruba than it is American Indian, part of the mysterious survival in New Orleans of ties to Africa that largely vanished elsewhere. In *The World That Made New Orleans*, music historian Ned Sublette says, "The Indians embody resistance" and "collectively, they're part of what knits New Orleans's black populace together." According to him, the refrain of one of their songs includes the line "We won't bow down." The Mardi Gras Indians head out on their own without announced routes on Mardi Gras and a few other days every year, but making the costumes and maintaining the communities lasts all year. This is probably the very essence of Mardi Gras and all Carnival as I understand it: maintaining community.

Now, I believe that community is a subversive force. To understand what I mean by subversive, let's go back to the defeatists. They, like much of our society, speak a language in which everything but a pie-in-the-sky kind of victory is defeat, in which everything that isn't black is white, in which if you haven't won, you've surely lost. If you asked them, they'd say we live in a capitalist society. In fact, we live in an officially capitalist society, but what prevents that force from destroying all of us is the social aid and pleasure we all participate in: parents don't charge their children for raising them; friends do things for each other, starting with listening without invoicing for billable hours; nurses and mechanics and everyone in between does a better job than money can pay for for beautiful reasons all their own; people volunteer to do something as specific as read to a blind person or as general as change the world. Our supposedly capitalist society is seething with anticapitalist energy, affection and joy, which is why most of us have survived the official bleakness. In other words, that's not all there is to our system. Our society is more than and other than capitalist in a lot of ways.

Our supposedly capitalist society is seething with anticapitalist energy, affection and joy, which is why most of us have survived.

To say that Carnival reconciles us to the status quo is to say that it affirms the world as it is. Now, for people in Rex, their Mardi Gras probably reinforces their world, but for those in some of the other krewes and rites, the same is true, and the reinforcement of the survival of the mutual aid societies that emerged after slavery is not reaffirmation of capitalism, domination, etc. It reinforces, in other words, their ongoing survival of capitalism and racism. Carnival also reinforces joy and ownership of public space and a kind of confidence in coexisting with a wide array of strangers. New Orleans itself is the place where, unlike the rest of the United States, slaves were not so cut off from chances to gather and chances to maintain their traditions. Jazz and jazz funerals, second-line parades and more derive in many ways from this subversive remnant of a non-European tradition. They didn't bow down. This is something to celebrate, and it is what is celebrated by some of the people in the streets.

In 2006 and 2007 Mardi Gras in New Orleans was also proof to the city that it had survived Katrina, that it had not died. The parades were full of scathing political commentary, even the mainstream ones (and Krewe du Vieux started parade season this year with the theme "Fired Up!" which brought in a lot of sexy devil costumes and floats depicting local political institutions as flaming hells). To say Carnival of New Orleans is to speak of dozens of disparate traditions and agendas braided together. Which makes the willingness of anyone to generalize about Carnival—which includes the Latin American, Caribbean, European and New Orleanian versions—troublesome.

Really, I shouldn't even be saying things so obvious except that defeatisms so obviously based on misapprehensions keep getting thrown into my face. Of course our society's dominant culture of media and entertainment serves consumerism and the belief in our own powerlessness. But if the status quo is the world as it is, it also includes myriad subversions and strategies for survival, and these seem to me to also be reinforced by Carnival. Fifteen years ago a subversive group called Reclaim the Streets (RTS) began turning British political demonstrations into something festive and inventive and even joyous, with a raucous in-your-face joy. "We are about taking back public space from the enclosed private arena. At its simplest it is an attack on cars as a principle agent of enclosure. It's about reclaiming the streets as public inclusive space from the private exclusive use of the car. But we believe in this as a broader principle, taking back those things which have been enclosed within capitalist circulation and returning them to collective use as a commons."

I'd argue that Reclaim the Streets in mostly Protestant Britain reclaimed the street festival, the Carnival spirit, as something deeply subversive. The group even called one of its demonstrations, the famous one on June 18, 1999, the Carnival Against Capital, held in London's financial district, which was much disrupted that day by the masked, festive throng. The participants saw taking back public space, making it inclusive, giving it a function other than its everyday one, as radical. This is what Carnival does, and so by RTS's terms Carnival is radical, not reconciling us to the status quo but subverting it. Carnival is inherently against capital.

From another perspective, the June 18 street party was a bunch of rowdy white kids, but it had sister actions in dozens of countries, including Nigeria, and it prepared the resistant world for the profoundly successful attack on corporate capital at the Seattle WTO meeting later that year, which, with its famed giant puppets, costumes, marching bands and banners, was very Carnivalesque. The Carnival for Full Enjoyment faced

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off the G-8 meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland, with similar tactics for subversion, notably CIRCA, the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, whose tactics were infinitely subversive and never oppositional and threw the police into confusion (but not rage). The performance theorist and activist Larry Bogad calls this "tactical carnival" and notes that in 2001 the FBI listed Carnival Against Capital as a terrorist group (failing to recognize that it was a concept, not an organization, but correctly recognizing that it doesn't really reconcile us to the status quo).

Former RTS organizer John Jordan points out that quite a lot of peasant uprisings began during festivals. In his book *Carnival and Other Christian Festivals*, Max Harris recounts the theological basis for Carnival's inversion of hierarchies, the passage in the Magnificat where Mary says (in Luke 1:52), in celebration of the impending birth of her son, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted the humble." Carnival, he says, is a festival of inversion. Some inversions are symbolic, decorative, recreational and temporary, but to discount even those is to discount the way that culture can provide us visions, invitations and tools to make such things more real and enduring, whether a full-fledged revolt, as at the Seattle WTO, or the survival of such things as aid and pleasure and pride and solidarity. Just to disrupt business as usual, as jazz funerals and second-line parades have always done in New Orleans, and as Reclaim the Streets did for a few years in a few countries, is subversive.

Carnival doesn't necessarily reconcile us to the status quo. But theories that defeat is inevitable, is our legacy, our history and our future do. We have arrived in a future that is itself science fiction: we have turned our planet into something far more turbulent and uncertain than anyone anticipated, and to survive it and bring it back to something livable will require a massive subversion of the status quo of corporate production and excess consumption, will require innovation, imagination and profound change. The defeatism that says there is nothing we can do or that we have no power sabotages our survival. It is pre-emptive surrender. "Status quo" in Latin means "the state in which," and the state things are usually in includes dominance, acquiescence and refusal to bow down, in various mixes. More than ever we need Carnival at its most subversive to survive, and to make resistance a pleasure and an adventure rather than only struggle and grim duty. This is the revolution that Emma Goldman wanted to dance to, the one that draws people in. Don't bow down. To capital. Or to cliché or oversimplification or defeatism. Try rising up instead. It's more interesting. ■

The Cleveland Model

Thoroughly green and worker-owned, co-ops are a vibrant response to economic distress.

by GAR ALPEROVITZ, TED HOWARD and THAD WILLIAMSON

Something important is happening in Cleveland: a new model of large-scale worker- and community-benefiting enterprises is beginning to build serious momentum in one of the cities most dramatically impacted by the nation's decaying economy. The Evergreen Cooperative Laundry (ECL)—a worker-owned, industrial-size, thoroughly "green" operation—opened its doors late last fall in Glenville, a neighborhood with a median income hovering around $18,000. It's the first of ten major enterprises in the works in Cleveland, where the poverty rate is more than 30 percent and the population has declined from 900,000 to less than 450,000 since 1950.

TIM ROBINSON

The employees, who are drawn largely from Glenville and other nearby impoverished neighborhoods, are enthusiastic. "Because this is an employee-owned business," says maintenance technician and former marine Keith Parkham, "it's all up to us if we want the company to grow and succeed."

"The only way this business will take off is if people are fully vested in the idea of the company," says work supervisor and former Time-Warner Cable employee Medrick Addison. "If you're not interested in giving it everything you have, then this isn't the place you should be." Addison, who also has a record, is excited about the prospects: "I never thought I could become an owner of a major corporation. Maybe through Evergreen things that I always thought would be out of reach for me might become possible."

These are not your traditional small-scale co-ops. The Evergreen model draws heavily on the experience of the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation in the Basque Country of Spain, the world's most successful large-scale cooperative effort (now employing 100,000 workers in an integrated network of more than 120 high-tech, industrial, service, construction, financial and other largely cooperatively owned businesses).

The Evergreen Cooperative Laundry, the flagship of the

Gar Alperovitz, author of America Beyond Capitalism, *and (with Lew Daly) of* Unjust Deserts, *is a professor at the University of Maryland and a principal of its Democracy Collaborative, an organization that has been assisting the Cleveland development effort. Ted Howard is executive director of the Democracy Collaborative. Thad Williamson is an assistant professor at the University of Richmond's Jepson School of Leadership Studies.*

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Cleveland effort, aims to take advantage of the expanding demand for laundry services from the healthcare industry, which is 16 percent of GDP and growing. After a six-month initial "probationary" period, employees begin to buy into the company through payroll deductions of 50 cents an hour over three years (for a total of $3,000). Employee-owners are likely to build up a $65,000 equity stake in the business over eight to nine years—a substantial amount of money in one of the hardest-hit urban neighborhoods in the nation.

Thoroughly green in all its operations, ECL will have the smallest carbon footprint of any industrial-scale laundry in northeast Ohio, and probably the entire state: most industrial-scale laundries use three gallons of water per pound of laundry (the measure common in industrial-scale systems); ECL will use just eight-tenths of a gallon to do the same job. A second green employee-owned enterprise also opened this fall as part of the Evergreen effort. Ohio Cooperative Solar (OCS) is undertaking large-scale installations of solar panels on the roofs of the city's largest nonprofit health, education and municipal buildings. In the next three years it expects to have 100 employee-owners working to meet Ohio's mandated solar requirements. OCS is also becoming a leader in Cleveland's weatherization program, thereby ensuring year-round employment. Another cooperative in development ($10 million in federal loans and grants already in hand) is Green City Growers, which will build and operate a year-round hydroponic food production greenhouse in the midst of urban Cleveland. The 230,000-square-foot greenhouse—larger than the average Wal-Mart superstore—will be producing more than 3 million heads of fresh lettuce and nearly a million pounds of (highly profitable) basil and other herbs a year, and will almost certainly become the largest urban food-producing greenhouse in the country.

A fourth co-op, the community-based newspaper *Neighborhood Voice*, is also slated to begin operations this year. Organizers project that an initial complex of ten companies will generate roughly 500 jobs over the next five years. The co-op businesses are focusing on the local market in general and the specific procurement needs of "anchor institutions," the large hospitals and universities that are well established in the area and provide a partially guaranteed market. Discussions are under way with the "anchors" to identify additional opportunities for the next generation of community-based businesses. Evergreen Business Services has been launched to support the growing network by providing back-office services, management expertise and turn-around skills should a co-op get into trouble down the road.

Significant resources are being committed to this effort by the Cleveland Foundation and other local foundations, banks and the municipal government. The Evergreen Cooperative Development Fund, currently capitalized by $5 million in grants, expects to raise another $10–$12 million—which in turn will leverage up to an additional $40 million in investment funds. Indeed, this may well be a conservative estimate. The fund invested $750,000 in the Evergreen Cooperative Laundry, which was then used to access an additional $5 million in financing, a ratio of almost seven to one. An important aspect of the plan is that each of the Evergreen co-operatives is obligated to pay 10 percent of its pre-tax profits back into the fund to help seed the development of new jobs through additional co-ops. Thus, each business has a commitment to its workers (through living-wage jobs, affordable health benefits and asset accumulation) and to the general community (by creating businesses that can provide stability to neighborhoods).

The overall strategy is not only to go green but to design and position all the worker-owned co-ops as the greenest firms

John Logue, 1947–2009

John Logue was a rare combination of thinker and doer: a professor with a radical vision for transforming American capitalism but also a practical man who had the knowledge and patience to make it happen, company by company. Those of us who learned from him know the country lost a treasure when John died on December 9 from a fast-moving cancer. He was only 62. He created and led the Ohio Employee Ownership Center at Kent State University, which for more than twenty years served as the hands-on midwife for nearly 500 worker-owned companies.

The timing of his death was especially poignant because John's vision is on the brink of realization. John was a leading mover in creating the Evergreen Cooperative Laundry described by the writers of the above article. The effort is a prototype for a very different kind of capitalism—an economic system that is more just and accountable because it is more democratic in its allocation of voice and power in management. Very difficult to accomplish, but not utopian.

John liked to talk about creating "Mondragon in Ohio," an industrial park filled with employee-owned enterprises and patterned after the Mondragon network of cooperative enterprises in the Basque region of Spain. I once heard him ask a workshop of working people, managers, bankers and union leaders to think about how the allied companies could share functions and costs. The room lit up with smart ideas, from energy efficiency and job-sharing to accounting and daycare. John understood that ordinary people have this great, untapped capacity to think for themselves.

John also understood that deep democratic change that truly matters cannot be faked or imposed from above, because the people are also required to change themselves. I occasionally needled him about how to get his grand vision moving faster. John would smile and say, Yes, that would be good, but only if the people know what they are doing. His death stokes my impatience. What this country needs are 1,000 John Logues or maybe 10,000. But only if they understand what John understood. —William Greider

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within their sectors. This is important in itself, but even more crucial is that the new green companies are aiming for a competitive advantage in getting the business of hospitals and other anchor institutions trying to shrink their carbon footprint. Far fewer green-collar jobs have been identified nationwide than had been hoped; and there is a danger that people are being trained and certified for work that doesn't exist. The Evergreen strategy represents another approach—first build the green business and jobs and then recruit and train the workforce for these new positions (and give them an ownership stake to boot).

Strikingly, the project has substantial backing, not only from progressives but from a number of important members of the local business community as well. Co-ops in general, and those in which people work hard for what they get in particular, cut across ideological lines—especially at the local level, where practicality, not rhetoric, is what counts in distressed communities. There is also a great deal of national buzz among activists and community-development specialists about "the Cleveland model." Potential applications of the model are being considered in Atlanta, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Detroit and a number of other cities around Ohio.

Taking us beyond traditional capitalism and socialism, the Cleveland model could be applied in hard-hit areas across the nation.

What's especially promising about the Cleveland model is that it could be applied in hard-hit industries and working-class communities around the nation. The model takes us beyond both traditional capitalism and traditional socialism. The key link is between national sectors of expanding public activity and procurement, on the one hand, and a new local economic entity, on the other, that "democratizes" ownership and is deeply anchored in the community. In the case of healthcare the link is also to a sector in which some implicit or explicit form of "national planning"—the movement toward universal healthcare—will all but certainly increase public influence and concern with how funds are used.

Whereas the Cleveland effort is targeted at very low-income, largely minority communities, the same principles could easily be applied in cities like Detroit and aimed at black and white workers displaced by the economic crisis and the massive planning failures of the nation's main auto companies. Late in October, in fact, the Mondragon Corporation and the million-plus-member United Steelworkers union announced an alliance to develop Mondragon-type manufacturing cooperatives in the United States and Canada. Says USW's Rob Witherell: "We are seeking the right opportunities to make it work, probably in manufacturing markets that we both understand."

Consider what might happen if the government and the UAW used the stock they own in General Motors because of the bailout to reorganize the company along full or joint worker-ownership lines—and if the new General Motors product line were linked to a plan to develop the nation's mass transit and rail system. Since mass transit is a sector that is certain to expand, there is every reason to plan its taxpayer-financed growth and integrate it with new community-stabilizing ownership strategies. The same is true of high-speed rail. Moreover, there are currently no US-owned companies producing subway cars (although some foreign-owned firms assemble subway cars in the United States). Nor do any American-owned companies build the kind of equipment needed for high-speed rail.

In 2007 public authorities nationwide bought roughly 600 new rail and subway cars along with roughly 15,000 buses and smaller "paratransit" vehicles. Total current capital outlays on vehicles alone amount to $3.8 billion; total annual investment outlays (vehicles plus stations and other infrastructure) are $14.5 billion. The Department of Transportation estimates that a $48 billion investment in transit capital projects could generate 1.3 million new green jobs in the next two years alone. There are also strong reasons to expedite the retirement of aging buses and replace them with more efficient energy-saving vehicles with better amenities such as bike racks and GPS systems—the procurement of which would, in turn, create more jobs.

President Obama has endorsed a strategy for making high-speed rail a priority in the United States. In a January 28 appearance in Florida he announced support for rail expansion in thirteen corridors across the nation based on an $8 billion "down payment" for investments in high-speed rail included in last year's stimulus package. The administration plans an additional $5 billion in spending over the next five years. Interest at the state level is also strong; in November 2008 voters in California approved a $10 billion bond to build high-speed rail.

Even more dramatic possibilities for a new industry organized on new principles are suggested by experts concerned with the impact of likely future oil shortages. Canadian scholars Richard Gilbert and Anthony Perl, projecting dramatic increases in the cost of all petroleum-based transportation, have proposed building 25,000 kilometers (about 15,000 miles) of track devoted to high-speed rail by 2025. Along with incremental upgrades of existing rail lines to facilitate increased and faster service, they estimate total investment costs at $2 trillion (roughly $140 billion each year for fifteen years).

All of this raises the prospect of an expanding economic sector—one that will inevitably be dominated by public funds and public planning. In the absence of an effort to create a national capacity to produce mass-transit vehicles and high-speed-rail equipment, the United States in general, and California and other regions in particular, will likely end up awarding contracts for production to other countries. The French firm Alstom, for example, is likely to benefit enor-

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mously from US contracts. The logic of building a new economic sector on new principles becomes even more obvious when you consider that by 2050 another 130 million people are projected to be living in the United States; by 2100 the Census Bureau's high estimate is more than 1 billion. Providing infrastructure and transportation for this expanding population will generate a long list of required equipment and materials that a restructured group of vehicle production companies could help produce—and, at the same time, help create new forms of ownership that anchor the economies of the local communities involved.

As reflection on transportation issues and the current ownership structure of General Motors suggests, the principles implicit in the nascent Cleveland effort point to the possibility of an important new strategic approach. It is one in which economic policy related to activities heavily financed by the public is used to create, and give stability to, enterprises that are more democratically owned, and to target jobs to communities in distress. The model does not, of course, rely only on public funds; as in Cleveland it serves a private market and hence faces the "discipline" of the market.

We are clearly only on the threshold of developing a sophisticated near-term national policy approach like that suggested for transportation—to say nothing of the fully developed principles of a systemic alternative. The Cleveland experiment is in its infancy, with many miles to go and undoubtedly many mistakes to make, learn from and correct. On the other hand, as New Deal scholars regularly point out, historically the development of models and experiments at the local and state levels provided many of the principles upon which national policy drew when the moment of decision arrived. It is not too early to get serious about the Clevelands of the world and the possible implications they may have for one day moving an economically decaying nation toward a new economic vision. ■

Letters

(continued from page 2)

has done nothing to secure the inclusion of GLBT victims of violence in federal hate crimes legislation. On the Obama campaign trail, I worked with GLBT volunteers, many now deeply disillusioned.
RICHARD MCKEE

ARLINGTON, VA.
I think the late, beloved Howard Zinn and Adolph Reed Jr. had it about right: Obama is nothing but a neoliberal Democrat wedded to war, empire, the corporations, the banks, Wall Street and the rich. I never expected otherwise.
JOHN REEDER

CLINTON TOWNSHIP, MICH.
As a former Obama supporter, I must say he continues to amaze me. He says he doesn't want to punish Wall Street. He doesn't want to push for a public option. Now he's talking about building nuclear power plants and offshore drilling. *This* is change we can believe in? I've never seen a president abandon his base so completely. He will rightly be celebrated in history as the first black president. But I suggest he should go down in history as our first Bud Lite president—sounds great, less filling.
DEAN DIBASIO

SUMMIT, N.J.
Only one of your forum writers—Andrew Bacevich, "a conservative who voted for Obama"—recognizes that Obama's inability to break with the military-industrial complex is his central failure. So long as the MIC is able to drain trillions from the economy for the open-ended and strategically hopeless war in Afghanistan, there is no way that Obama, for all his rhetoric, can escape inevitable failure. His first step toward success would be to request the resignation of longtime Bush loyalist Defense Secretary Robert Gates.
J.C. PHILLIPS

CHICAGO
Here's what I see: a president who was against the Iraq War and who is ending it; a president who has pulled us away from the brink of economic disaster; a president who treats the rest of the world as his equal, not his servant, and has restored the respect the United States enjoyed until George W. Bush; a president who tries to include the Republicans, even though they have slandered, insulted and disrespected him; a president who respects the Constitution and upholds it; a president who is trying to do the right thing, admits his mistakes and tries to correct them. At one year out he is doing just fine under some of the most difficult conditions this nation has ever been through. Thanks, Mr. President.
TINA ISSA

WWMS?

AUSTIN
We at Molly Ivins's beloved *Texas Observer* frequently wonder, as Eric Alterman does, "What Would Molly Say?" [Feb. 1]. The *Observer* aspires to say the kinds of things she did and would about the things that mattered to her. Oh, what a glorious time she would have had with the events and personalities that have confused, amused and frustrated us in the three years since her death. Thank you for remembering Molly, who was co-editor, for her perceptive and humorous take on the affairs of state and the world. We are, all of us, indeed "the more the lesser for her loss."
CARLTON CARL, *The Texas Observer*

Beware the CAT

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND.
In "Ten Things You Can Do to Improve Your Healthcare" [Feb. 1], item 6 warns, "Beware of the overuse of diagnostic imaging procedures such as MRIs and CAT scans. They add to costs and radiation exposure." While ionizing radiation (the kind found in X-rays and radioactive materials) from CAT scans is a definite concern, MRIs do not expose patients to such radiation. Indeed, that's a major advantage of MRIs over CAT scans.
JOHN CARAHER

Corrections

In Miriam Markowitz's "A Fine Romance" [Feb. 8], it was Newland (not Newbold) Archer who was agonizing over whether to leave New York with Ellen Olenska.

In Lawrence Lessig's "How to Get Our Democracy Back" [Feb. 22], Blue Dog Mike Ross is from Arkansas, not Alabama.

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Books & the Arts.

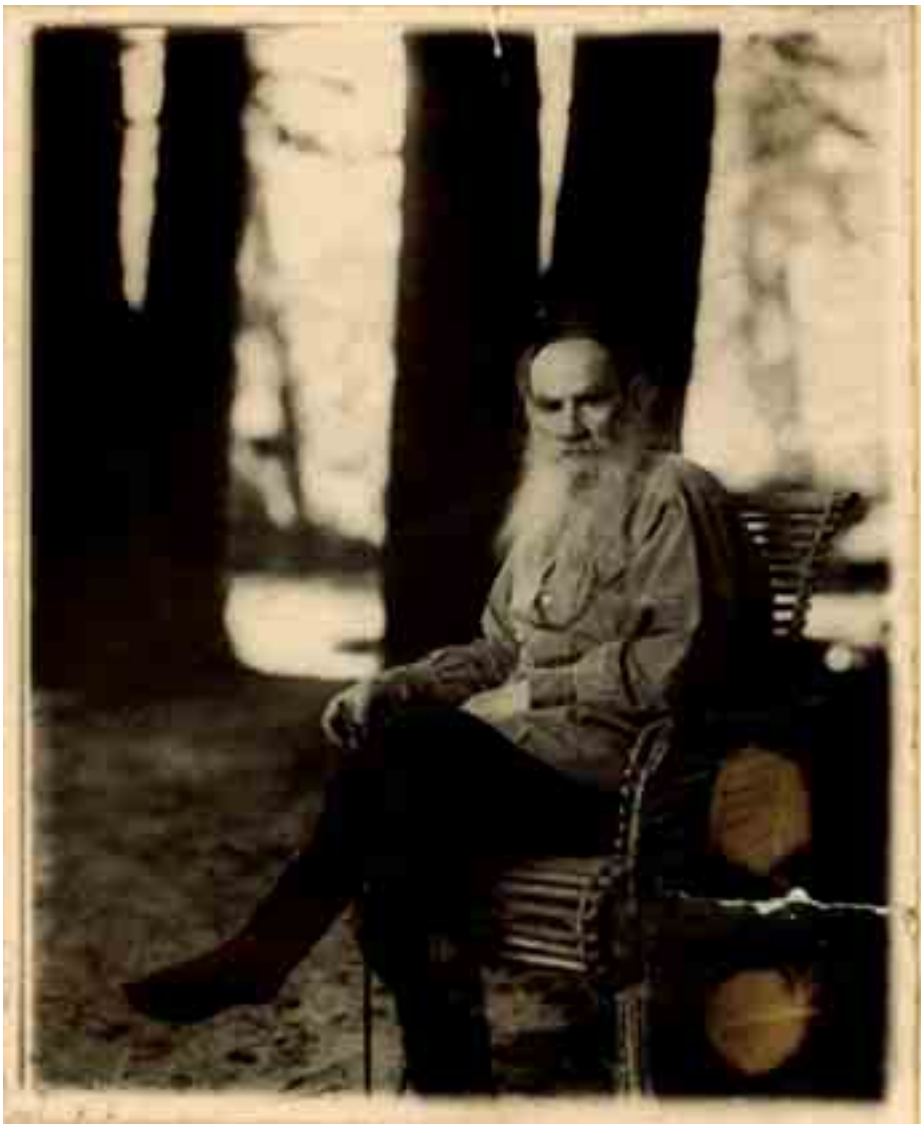
The Renunciation Artist

by WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ

A Russian soldier is taken prisoner by Caucasian mountaineers. They bring him to a village, where everything is strange. "And the dark one—he was brisk, lively, moving as if on springs—went straight up to Zhilin, squatted down, bared his teeth, patted him on the shoulder, started jabbering something very quickly in his own language, winked, clucked his tongue, and kept repeating: 'Kood uruss! Kood uruss!'" But slowly, the Russian starts to get through. He makes a friend of the dark one's daughter, a girl of 13, by fashioning a doll of clay. It has "a nose, arms, legs, and a Tartar shirt." She brings him food, talks, plays with him. Later, surveying the hills in search of escape, he sees a river far below, with women on the bank, "like little dolls."

The story, "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," is about perspective—about physical and cultural distances and the angles of vision they enforce. Tolstoy doubles the point by trapping us, too, on foreign ground. The story's notation is rudimentary, clipped ("The nights were short. He saw light through a chink"), the diction mined with alien words ("aoul," "saklya," "beshmet") we're forced to make out on the run. We stand with Zhilin; nothing is explained, because nothing is understood. But the story is also about art, its ability to bridge the crevasse of otherness. Zhilin makes dolls, and so, the simile of the women reminds us, does Tolstoy. His figures, too, have a nose, arms, legs and Tartar shirt, fashioned from the clay of words. Zhilin leaves his doll on the roof, hoping the girl will see it and understand, and so Tolstoy does with us, placing the wager of art.

"The Prisoner of the Caucasus" makes a fitting start to the present volume, though probably not for reasons its translators intended. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich and Other Stories* represents the seventeenth volume of Russian classics produced since 1990 by the acclaimed and apparently indefatigable team of Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky: eight of Dostoyevsky, four of Tolstoy, the rest of Gogol, Chekhov and Bulgakov. The new selection incorporates many of Tolstoy's most celebrated short works, including "The Kreutzer Sonata," "Master and Man," "After the Ball," "Alyosha the Pot" and "Hadji Murat." Other than "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," however, all date from the last thirty years of Tolstoy's long life (he died in 1910, at 82), and therein lies the kind of challenge faced by Zhilin himself.



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Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii's photograph of Leo Tolstoy at his estate near Tula, 1908

The Death of Ivan Ilyich and Other Stories
By Leo Tolstoy.
Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky.
Knopf. 500 pp. $28.95.

As Pevear outlines in his introduction to the new collection, the last decades of Tolstoy's life were marked by a turn toward ideological radicalism and spiritual extremity. In a series of works composed in the wake of *Anna*

William Deresiewicz is a Nation *contributing writer. He was nominated for a 2009 National Magazine Award for reviews and criticism.*

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Karenina (1878)—*A Confession*, the first and most powerful, described his own crisis and conversion; others bear titles like "What Men Live By" and *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*—he expounded the moral philosophy that became known around the world as "Tolstoyism": anarchist, pacifist, ascetic, egalitarian, vegetarian, anti-church. The Sermon on the Mount became the central text of Tolstoy's renovated Christianity; its highest ideal, borrowed from the Russian mendicant tradition as well as, via Schopenhauer, from Eastern religion, was renunciation: the surrender not only of material possessions but of all attachment to this world, this life. Tolstoy's own life ended when, old and sick, he fled his estate at the onset of winter to set out, apparently, on the renouncer's path himself, a step with which he had long wrestled.

The later Tolstoy—zealot, true believer, extremist—is a person whose very spirit is alien to us.

The spiritual anguish such ideals inflicted may be inferred from "Father Sergius," a story Tolstoy labored at throughout the 1890s. The tale mirrors its author's predicament. A proud and brilliant young guards officer, repulsed by the world's corruption, gives up his career on the eve of a glittering marriage to live instead as a monk, later also as a hermit. Yet however fast he flees, he can't escape his own vanity and ambition. An act of moral heroism—sought out by a frivolous beauty, he amputates a finger to ward off temptation ("if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off")—brings him growing celebrity and a flood of supplicants. But the more famous he gets, the more he is eaten up by self-doubt, self-criticism, self-disgust. Has he really surrendered his pride, or only found a roundabout way of indulging it? Do people truly need him, or only take him further from God? Does God even exist? He feels empty, dirty, lost. He thinks of killing himself, as Tolstoy often did, then blessed by a prophetic dream, discovers at last the key to holiness, disappearing into a life of selfless anonymity.

A rehearsal, it seems, for Tolstoy's final flight, and a précis of the volume's commitments. Between the first tale and the last ("Hadji Murat," which revisits the army and the Caucasus) are nine stories that turn on the axis of moral struggle, most of them culminating, like "Father Sergius," in a flash of epiphany, a stroke of salvation. The mood is one, by and large, of intense emotional compression amounting to a kind of psychic strangulation—the soul, beset, can barely breathe—the governing idea of what Pevear calls in his introduction to *Anna Karenina* (it is the quality that Anna shares with Levin, and both of them with their creator) "metaphysical solitude." Other people may help or hinder, but our real business is with God. The art is supremely subtle—this is still Tolstoy—but the message could not be blunter: pick up your cross and follow me.

Not a body of work the contemporary reader is apt to find congenial. Leave aside the religiosity. We have learned to distrust the story with a message, any message. We disdain the writer who comes to us bearing ideas or ideologies. We don't like a moralizer, don't want to be preached at, don't believe in answers, in endings. We put our faith in ambiguity, complexity, irresolution, doubt. Life isn't that simple, we think. It doesn't happen that way. But that is exactly what Tolstoy believes. There is an answer, and while it certainly isn't easy, it is simple, and it does happen, it should happen. "Just then," one story here concludes, "it was revealed to him that his life had not been what it ought, but that it could still be rectified.…'So that's it!' he suddenly said aloud. 'What joy!'" The later Tolstoy—zealot, extremist, true believer—is a kind of person whose very spirit is alien to us. In a way that's never true of *War and Peace* or *Anna Karenina*, the stories in this volume confront us, like Zhilin, with a radical otherness.

Tolstoy's renunciations extended even to art itself—or at least the kind of art represented by his earlier masterpieces. Style, form, the profusion of realistic detail for which his great novels are so celebrated, even the act of invention itself: all these he came to regard, at least in certain moods, as frivolous and therefore evil. Goodness mattered, not beauty. After finishing "Master and Man," not only an exquisitely realized piece of work but an exemplarily Christian one, he told his diary, "I am ashamed to have wasted my time on such stuff." He wrote, as it were, behind his own back.

But still he wrote. His late style is leaner, his forms more spare, but this is also the economy of achieved mastery. He does more with less, and the Tolstoyan sounds, instantly recognizable, are still there. First, the way with dialogue. "But how live with a person if there's no love?" says a lady, disputing the question of divorce.

> "That wasn't gone into before," the old man said in an impressive tone. "It's only started now. There's something, and she up and says: 'I'm leaving you.' Even among muzhiks this fashion's caught on: 'Here,' she says, 'take all your shirts and trousers, and I'll go with Vanka, his hair's curlier than yours.' Well, go and talk after that. The first thing in a woman should be fear."

That's voicing and voicing squared, the old man's sound plus his version of the peasant's.

(To see why Pevear and Volokhonsky are so cherished, compare this with another translation:

> "People didn't make such a fuss about all that in the old days," said the merchant in a serious voice. "That's all just come in lately. First thing you hear her say nowadays is 'I'm leaving you.' It's a fashion that's caught on even among the muzhiks. 'Here you are,' she says; 'here's your shirts and trousers, I'm off with Vanka, his hair's curlier than yours.' And it's no good arguing with her. Whereas what ought to come first for a woman is fear."

The new version is more flexible, individuated, immediate and in a lot fewer words.)

Then, the power of "concrete evocation," as Tolstoy's greatest gift has been called:

> Carefully picking his way through the dung-heaped stable, Mukhorty frisked and bucked, pretending that he wanted to give a kick with his hind leg at Nikita, who was jogging beside him to the well.
>
> "Go on, go on, you rascal!" muttered Nikita, who knew the care with which Mukhorty had thrown up his hind leg, just enough to touch his greasy sheepskin jacket but not to hit him, and who especially liked that trick.
>
> After drinking the icy water, the horse sighed, moving his wet, firm lips, from the whiskers of which transparent drops dripped into the trough, and stood still as if in thought; then he suddenly gave a loud snort.

"If the world could write by itself," Isaac Babel said, "it would write like Tolstoy."

And then, the psychological clairvoyance:

> Today Butler was going into action for the second time, and it was a joy to him to think that they were about

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to be fired at, and that he not only would not duck his head as a cannonball flew over or pay attention to the whistle of bullets, but would carry his head high, as he had done already, and look about at his comrades and soldiers with a smile in his eyes, and start talking in the most indifferent voice about something irrelevant.

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Tolstoy's study at his estate, 1908

And then again, the comedy of manners, always disturbed, in Tolstoy, by an undertow of seriousness. Two men meet at a wake:

> Pyotr Ivanovich's colleague, Schwartz, was about to come downstairs and, from the topmost step, seeing him enter, stopped and winked at him, as if to say: "Ivan Ilyich made a botch of it; we'll do better, you and I."

A high school teacher once asked me to write some satire for the literary magazine. How do you do that?, I wanted to know. "Oh," she said, "just write down what happens"—as fine a definition of satire as I've come across, and a pretty good characterization of Tolstoy. But of course, seeing what happens is half the game, and getting it down is the other half, and few have done either as well as he.

Yet neither acuity of observation nor transparency of style is enough to explain Tolstoy's secret. Reginald Farrer, in an essay on Jane Austen, said this: "The essence of conviction, in the game of make-believe, is to convince yourself first of all, finally and absolutely." More even than Austen, more than anyone, this Tolstoy did. In a way impossible to trace but immediately and everywhere felt, he communicates to us his utter belief in the world he presents. It is as real to him, we sense, as reality itself (one reason he could mingle historical and fictional characters, in *War and Peace* and elsewhere, without compunction). But that conviction evidently rested on another. Reality was simply much more real to Tolstoy than it is to the rest of us. He believed, as few people finally do, in the world. And this belief—though the secular mind, which sets the natural and supernatural at odds, may find the notion counterintuitive—was of a piece with his religious faith. He had his moments of doubt, like Father Sergius, but they were not the skepticism of a rationalist. Tolstoy believed in God even when he didn't: believed in the spiritual imperatives that God represents. The world was present to him as a material reality because it was present to him as a moral one, and it was this double conviction, carried over into his work, that gives his fiction its unsurpassed solidity.

Nothing demonstrates this better than "The Death of Ivan Ilyich." The story gives us an almost unbearable description of the process of dying, elaborated with all of Tolstoy's narrative powers and agonizingly prolonged for some thirty pages, from the moment the title character notices "a strange taste in his mouth" until he meets his end in three days of incessant screaming. But Ivan Ilyich's greatest torments are spiritual. Can this really be all there is?, he asks himself. Death—and nothing more? Pain—and nothing more? "Can it be that life is so meaningless and vile?" This is a story about a man who avoids thinking about life—a man for whom the moral world is no more real than it is for most of us—until he is forced to think about death.

Like "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," though in a very different way, it is a story about perspective—the reversal of perspective inflicted by the prospect of extinction. It opens with its title character already gone, Pyotr Ivanovich and his colleague Schwartz, the dead man's fellow functionaries in the courts of law, going through their pantomime around the coffin. This is the outside view, death as a social fact, a temporary awkwardness in the lives of people who are no more inclined to take it seriously—"we'll do better, you and I"—than Ivan Ilyich was. But then the story doubles back, to narrate its protagonist's life from his own point of view, reversing the perspective in two senses. As for Pyotr Ivanovich and friends, though we expect to meet them again at story's end, we never do. In one of his boldest strokes here, Tolstoy doesn't even bother to close the frame. The story has created a retroactive dramatic irony that's already told us everything we need to know about these men, a single file of Ivan Ilyiches marching blindly toward the grave.

Ivan Ilyich's existence, before he fell ill, had been one of unswerving adherence to form. To live well, he believed, was to do precisely what was expected of him, what everyone did in his class:

> It was the same as with all people who are not exactly rich, but who want to resemble the rich, and for that reason only resemble each other: damasks, ebony, flowers, carpets, and bronzes, dark and gleaming—all that all people of a certain kind acquire in order to resemble all people of a certain kind.

His watchwords—we hear them again and again—are "pleasantness" and "decency,"

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joined, as he starts to prosper in earnest, by "ease." Everything else, including the emptiness of his own marriage, including the human suffering he sees before him as a magistrate, he pushes out of consciousness. But of course, pleasantness, decency and ease are precisely what dying overturns. Here is yet another reversal, and the key word is "decency." Death is indecent in the physical sense—a servant must clean up his waste—but also in the social one. It just isn't the sort of thing polite people talk about:

> His wife listened, but in the middle of his account his daughter came in with her hat on: she and her mother were going somewhere. She forced herself to sit down and listen to this boredom, but could not stand it for long, and the mother did not hear him out.

This is the greatest torment of all: the social lies that deprive Ivan Ilyich of the comfort, the simple companionship, that is what he really needs. He hears his wife entertaining in the next room, meets his daughter's fiancé as if it were business as usual. No one wants to see what's really going on. In the midst of life we are in death, the story says, but in the midst of death we are in denial.

And then, the final reversal. Dying seems, to Ivan Ilyich, like being pushed into "some narrow and deep black sack," and the worst of it is that he can't get all the way into it. "What kept him from getting into it was the claim that his had been a good life." He is stuck, as he has always been stuck. But finally, in his last hour, he falls through—which means, simply, that he surrenders the lie. "Yes," he thinks, "it was all not right." But even now, he sees, it is not too late to make it right—he only needs to do what's best for those around him. ("A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another.") He is the one who discovers, on the edge of death, that his life can still be rectified, and says aloud, "What joy!" Death dies: "Instead of death there was light." Revelation, repentance, salvation, bliss—but for all the Christian overtones, no priest, no creed, no promise of heaven, no explicit mention even of God. The truth sets Ivan Ilyich free, but it is not a mystical truth, it is the plain truth of his own life.

And yet, with what agonies won. "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" was completed in 1886. Thirteen years later, another Slav composed a deathbed scene, perhaps with this in mind, that culminated not with "What joy!" but with a very different phrase: "The horror! The horror!" Yet finally, the two are not so very far apart. Ivan Ilyich escapes Kurtz's abyss, but by scarcely a page. The truth, for Tolstoy, may be simple, but it is not, it is never, easy.

There is an emblematic moment in "Father Sergius." The title character, impelled by his prophetic dream, seeks out an old woman he had known as a girl. "It can't be!" she exclaims: "Styopa! Sergius! Father Sergius!" The names summarize his ascent, from boy to man to famous ascetic. "Yes, himself," he replies, "only not Sergius, not Father Sergius, but the great sinner Stepan Kasatsky." Salvation happens in Tolstoy's great novels, too, but it happens very differently. Both Levin in *Anna Karenina* and Pierre in *War and Peace* come eventually to understand the truth of conduct and the meaning of life, and understand them in Christian terms, but their journeys are still novelistic, still patterned on the idea of *Bildung*, personal development, that governed the nineteenth-century novel. The individual enters into adult experience, tries his hand at this and that—"he had long sought in various directions for that peace, that harmony with himself," we read of Pierre, "sought it in philanthropy, in Masonry, in the distractions of social life, in wine, in a heroic deed of self-sacrifice, in romantic love for Natasha"—and at last discovers his place in the world. Inner aligns with outer, soul with society, and the young man, as we say, makes a name for himself. (Or young woman: Elizabeth Bennet turns into Mrs. Darcy.)

Confrontation runs between, not inner and outer, but inner and, as it were, innermost.

But in the later Tolstoy, the confrontation runs between, not inner and outer, but inner and, as it were, innermost. "Father Sergius," the climax of the old woman's sequence, the name that does indeed manifest the man for all the world to see—his talent and courage, his pride and ambition—is precisely the problem. "Not Father Sergius, but the great sinner Stepan Kasatsky." That's really who he is—until finally, surrendering even that designation to a wanderer's anonymity, he becomes just no one at all. For the later Tolstoy, the layers a novelistic character accumulates—vocation, family, identity—are things to be discarded. Not, here, a thickening into wisdom but a lightening into humility. Not education, but revelation. Not development, but renunciation: the self stripped to its core.

The self stripped, finally, of itself. Renunciation, passed to the limit, becomes death—or at least indifference to life. "Master and Man," with the archetypal directness its title implies, gives us both alternatives. Two men are caught in a blizzard. The master, a smug and greedy merchant and thus a kind of spiritual relative, at a different level of class, to Ivan Ilyich, achieves salvation, at the very end, by giving his life for his servant. But the servant, the "man"—he is Nikita, the one who leads the horse—has known salvation all along, because he holds his life cheap. "What," the master says in the midst of the storm, "should I perish like this, for nothing?" But Nikita says to himself, "Well, no help for it, you'll have to get used to the new." He waits for God; he takes what comes.

Yet the story, a brilliantly subtle double portrait, still psychologizes Nikita's serenity. He trusts in the afterlife, and in any case, his existence here "was not a continuous feast, but, on the contrary, a ceaseless servitude." But in "Alyosha the Pot," Tolstoy creates a character whose peace passes our understanding. Alyosha is purity itself, a holy fool, a lifelong child—though his life is cut off at 21. He works, he obeys, he accepts. And at the end he says, "Why not? Can we just keep on living?" His story, five pages long, is a soap bubble, a folk tale, the last perfection of Tolstoy's late art, struck off, in his late 70s, in the space of a single day—as brief, as innocent, as complete in its simplicity as its subject.

Alyosha does have one adventure: he falls in love with the cook. But the master forbids it, so he gives it up. Tolstoy—and here we can scarcely believe him, let alone comply—would have us do likewise. No marriage, no sex—like the Shakers:

> "All the same," I said, "…the human race would come to an end."…
>
> "Why should it go on, this human race?" he said.
>
> "Why? If it didn't we wouldn't exist."
>
> "And why should we exist?"

The exchange is from "The Kreutzer Sonata," a tale of adultery and murder and one of several stories here that revile sexuality—and as the title suggests, the music that

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provokes it—with a kind of helpless despair. (Its condemnation of marriage and frank treatment of sex made it the most notorious of Tolstoy's many controversial works. The czarist government effectively banned it; Theodore Roosevelt was moved to call its author, with brilliant if unintentional ambiguity, a "sexual moral pervert.") Another is "The Devil," drawn from Tolstoy's affair with one of his peasants and so akin in setting and characters that it seems like an outtake from the Levin—that is, the autobiographical—half of *Anna Karenina*. The title casts a net of reference from which nothing, finally, escapes. The devil is woman, the devil is man, the devil is desire itself.

And in these stories, at least, stronger than God. No revelation here, only the negative epiphany of self-condemnation. No grace, only the demonic salvation of murder or suicide. "The Devil," unpublished during Tolstoy's life, gives us both possibilities in two alternative endings. "The Kreutzer Sonata," in effect, gives us each in succession. The protagonist (he's the one who thinks we should all live like the Shakers) has murdered his unfaithful wife. Freed by the courts, he rides the rails of Russia confessing his story, like the Ancient Mariner, to anyone who will listen—condemned, like one of Dante's sinners, to an endless round of remorse. Not suicide, exactly, but a kind of spiritual self-extinction, a living death.

The tale is virtually Gothic, at moments, in its gruesomeness, but that is nothing to the horror sounded by "The Forged Coupon," a compressed epic of sin and salvation and the clearest statement here of the aging Tolstoy's aesthetic mission. (It is the story that inspired Robert Bresson's film *L'Argent*.) The coupon is a bank voucher, altered by a couple of wealthy schoolboys to show a higher denomination. They pass it off on a merchant, who passes it off on a peasant, who's jailed for unwittingly trying to spend it and turns horse thief out of bitterness. The taint spreads. The merchant's porter, suborned to bear false witness, also begins to steal. Why shouldn't he, seeing how the masters act? A fair-minded landlord, his horses stolen, abuses his peasants and winds up getting killed. His driver, falsely accused of the theft, becomes a good-for-nothing. The horse thief, caught elsewhere, is also killed. And so on and so forth, evil begetting evil, fraud leading to theft leading to murder, until some two dozen characters have been swept into the vortex.

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Finally, there is Stepan, the horse thief's killer. In prison, something snaps. "All the authorities, all the masters," he thinks, "all were robbers who sucked the people's blood." Once he gets out, he makes Raskolnikov look like a pacifist. He axes a couple, kills a whole family just because it enters his head, then puts the knife to another. Tolstoy's portrait of a psychopath is as ruthless as his picture, in "Ivan Ilyich," of a dying man. "Enough of your talk," Stepan says, as he cuts his final throat.

But he isn't quick enough, for the words of the victim, a virtuous old widow—"You destroy other people's souls, but your own most of all"—start to work their way into his brain. The curve of the story has reached its moral minimum, and now begins its slow bend back toward the light. The narrative architecture is remarkably deft. Stepan, in prison, repents. The merchant's porter, jailed alongside him, is moved to repent in turn. So is the landlord's driver, another prison mate, and the hangman who was to have finished off the landlord's killers. Hearing the story, the landlord's widow also converts, and so eventually even do the schoolboys, now grown up, who began it all. As sin begat sin, so repentance begets repentance, and with a speed, a narrative ease, that openly defies our disbelief.

Art, Tolstoy says in *What Is Art?*, another late work, is "that human activity which consists in one man's consciously conveying to others…the feelings he has experienced, and in others being infected by those feelings and also experiencing them." While evil, in the first half of "The Forged Coupon," spreads through action, virtue, in the second, spreads precisely through a kind of emotional infection. And the vector, indeed, is story: Stepan's story, the hangman's, but one other story above all. When goodness enters the tale—the widow Stepan later kills converts a tailor, who converts a peasant, who ultimately completes Stepan's conversion in prison—it enters thus:

> "Must be you got it from books, that there'll be a reward for it in the next world."
>
> "Of that we know nothing," said Marya Semyonovna, "only it's better to live this way."
>
> "And is that in the books?"
>
> "It's in the books, too," she said, and she read him the Sermon on the Mount.

All goodness starts, for Tolstoy, with the Good Book. All narrative goodness, too. *What Is Art?* renounces the accumulation of detail that marks the novel, Tolstoy's novels above all. Its aesthetic ideal is the Bible, with its lapidary tales. "The Forged Coupon" begins with a fair bit of circumstantial elaboration, but as it goes on, and especially once the infection of virtue begins to spread in earnest, its episodes get briefer and briefer, approaching the biblical norm. The last three, dispatched in a page and a half, achieve it: the barest context, a bit of dialogue, a climax. The story, too, converts—and hopes in turn, like the text it emulates, to convert its readers. To received ways of making fiction, says the aged Tolstoy—this latter-day prophet, this man apart, this blazing soul—the kingdom of God is not of this form. ■

AP

Louis Armstrong before a concert at London's Festival Hall, December 18, 1956

Not Even Bing's

by DAVID SCHIFF

Pops
A Life of Louis Armstrong.
By Terry Teachout.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 475 pp. $30.

Reading *Pops*, Terry Teachout's new biography of Louis Armstrong, I was reminded, over and over again, of the line about the Broadway show where you walk in humming the tunes. No sooner has the audience settled into their seats than Teachout begins revisiting hallowed moments in Armstrong's career. Here is Armstrong's inauspicious birth, on August 4, 1901, into the gritty depths of the New Orleans caste system, and here his musical mentorship with Joe "King" Oliver, a lifelong hero, and their groundbreaking recording of "Dippermouth Blues." A little later, there's Armstrong's partnership with Earl Hines, which widened the spectrum of

David Schiff, a professor of music at Reed College, is the composer of the opera Gimpel the Fool *and author of books on the music of Elliott Carter and George Gershwin.*

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jazz with "West End Blues" and "Weatherbird," and his recordings of cheesy pop numbers like "Sweethearts on Parade," which showed singers from Billie Holiday onward how to transmute tin-pan tunes into gold. And here, too, are familiar moments from the later career: the endless tours with the All Stars, no gig complete without "Rockin' Chair" sung (and ritually mocked) with Jack Teagarden; the State Department tours; "Blueberry Hill," "Mack the Knife," "Hello, Dolly!"; and the charges, from the jazz establishment, of selling out, and from younger jazz giants, like Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis, of being an Uncle Tom. As Gary Giddins has explained, they reconsidered the charge after Armstrong told a reporter that President Eisenhower was "two-face" and had "no guts" for acting indecisively when Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus barred black children from entering a white school.

The story is a familiar one, and not only because *Pops*, as Teachout admits, is "less a work of scholarship than an exercise in synthesis." (In other words, there's little evidence of original research, and no new revelations about the life or the music.) Gary Giddins's *Satchmo*, from 1988, remains the best appreciation of a musician whose genius as a trumpeter, improviser, singer and entertainer still defies comparison. Other biographies, most notably Laurence Bergreen's *Louis Armstrong: An Extravagant Life* (1997), sleuthed much of the life story. More important, Armstrong told his own story, and in words more pungent than any scholar's or critic's, in *Swing That Music* (1936) and *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans* (1954), as well as in less guarded private writings edited by musicologist Thomas Brothers for the collection *In His Own Words* (2006).

Pops also has a didactic bent, and with it far older precedents. Teachout has tailored Armstrong's life story along lines that recall Horatio Alger, a parallel he notes early on, and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, an analogy not explicitly drawn but implicit in the scene setting: "Faced with the terrible realities of the time and place into which he had been born, he did not repine, but returned love for hatred and sought salvation in work." I must have been humming a hymn. Stories repeated, embellished and reinflected in an "exercise in synthesis" may be pleasing or flattering to read, especially if they confirm one's tastes or prejudices, but they amount to mythology, not history. Even if we accept the premise that *Pops* is not scholarship but journalism, it violates the first principle of that form: don't give the reader secondhand news.

Some of the book's shortcomings are indicative of a larger problem: the history of the vast and seemingly familiar cultural realms of American life in which Armstrong flourished—jazz, popular entertainment, celebrity—is only now slowly beginning to be written. It might seem late in the day to claim that jazz history is in its infancy, but one of the finest jazz historians, Lawrence Gushee, made the case with exemplary precision four years ago in his revelatory *Pioneers of Jazz: The Story of the Creole Band*. Most of what passes for jazz history has been written by record collectors, Gushee explains, and their writing is "spectacularly successful in avoiding what might be called esthetic or musical issues, not to speak of broader questions of social and economic history." Gushee also laments the "absence of African-Americans from the rosters of writers on jazz." He's thinking specifically of their conspicuous nonpresence as authors of jazz history textbooks and, until recently, jazz biography, for in fact there is a large and distinguished body of critical writing about jazz by African-Americans such as Ralph Ellison, Albert Murray, Stanley Crouch, Amiri Baraka, Ishmael Reed, Hazel Carby and Robert O'Meally. None of these writers appear in Teachout's bibliography. Not one of them, by the way, could be considered a marginal hothead: Murray's *Stomping the Blues* (1976) has become an unavoidable (I would have thought) foundation for jazz hermeneutics.

Pops violates the first principle of journalism: don't give the reader secondhand news.

Jazz history—or in Teachout's case jazz biography that is not informed by the work of African-American critics, or refuses to engage with them—remains stuck in the discophile groove: it's jazz connoisseurship that reduces jazz history to a disembodied series of the "greatest" solos by the "greatest" soloists. Armstrong, of course, should loom large in that story, however neat and smooth it might be, but he deserves just as central a role in jazz history that addresses larger—and messier—social and cultural issues. That history is being written by many younger scholars, black and white, but Teachout turns a deaf ear to it.

What exactly does Teachout hear? As if Armstrong's performance with a symphony orchestra were the high point of his career, Teachout devotes his prologue to an account of a concert at New York City's Lewisohn Stadium in July 1956 conducted by Leonard Bernstein, still in his 20s. Armstrong performed one number: W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues." Compelled, as was already his habit, to educate the audience, Bernstein pontificated that Armstrong's music was "honest and simple, even noble." Would Bernstein have been as condescending to any white soloist, whether it was Rubinstein or Dave Brubeck? Bernstein had certainly demonstrated a flair for jazz with compositions such as *Fancy Free* and the score for *On the Waterfront*, but it was jazz filtered through the symphonic elaborations of George Gershwin and Aaron Copland, and far from the undiluted idiom of Armstrong or even Duke Ellington. (Armstrong had changed the sound of the twentieth century while Bernstein was still in knee pants.) And who was Bernstein's audience? Teachout says that concertgoers of a certain age remember taking the subway uptown to the stadium on the City College campus—that is to say, to Harlem. This was not a concert for the neighborhood. Armstrong was the only African-American onstage (the elderly Handy was in the audience, where he listened tearfully to Armstrong perform his song), and yet the concert sold out in a season when interest in the classics, even for the ticket holders taking the A train from downtown, was dwindling. The stadium and Bernstein, like American music in general, were in Armstrong's debt.

Undaunted by the occasion, Armstrong, who had suffered far worse indignities, warmed up by blowing excerpts from Italian operas. He was playing to the house in a high-stakes cultural sparring match: Bernstein's pearly elocution, which put the "high" in high art, was as much of a contrivance as Armstrong's lowdown N'awlins antics, but Armstrong had all the best notes. His musical prowess was joined to a perpetually beaming persona, which to the audience's delight upended concert-world formalities. Sizing up the situation with seasoned acuity, he told the audience that he "was gassed" to be there. At similar occasions he would talk about "wailing" with his wife or sing the praises of a laxative called Swiss Kriss. Some might call this "signifying," but Teachout just views this

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act as Armstrong being himself. He sees Armstrong's personality mirrored in the lyrics of Johnny Mercer's "Ac-cen-tu-ate the Positive" and frames the image with Louis Jordan's remark that Armstrong was "always happy," though there is much evidence in the book to the contrary. Teachout goes on to validate Armstrong's talents by citing eminent white artists like Philip Larkin, Herbert von Karajan, Kingsley Amis, Jean Renoir, Jackson Pollock, Tallulah Bankhead and Le Corbusier, along with grudging praise from Miles Davis. Teachout makes Davis pay mightily for dissing the master.

The bombshell comes near the end of the prologue, when Teachout quotes from the essay "Louis Armstrong + the Jewish Family, in New Orleans, La., the Year of 1907," published posthumously in *In His Own Words*. In this essay, written in 1969 when he was recovering from a life-threatening illness, and dedicated to his manager Joe Glaser, Armstrong recalled how the Karnofsky family helped him in his boyhood. But Teachout quotes instead an outpouring of rage from Armstrong against the black community, beginning with "Negroes *never* did stick together and they *never* will" and ending with "Believe it—the White Folks did *everything that's decent* for *me*." That's our Louis. Claiming that the meaning of the passage is "as clear as a high C," Teachout does not contextualize it, let alone test its validity. Neither does he square it with accen-tu-at-ing the positive. Just in case there was any doubt, in the November 2009 issue of *Commentary* Teachout prepared readers of his book, which was published the following month, for his pinched reading of the essay: "The bluntness with which Armstrong expressed himself in this 1969 memoir was more than just the remembered resentment of an old man. On numerous other occasions, he made it clear that he believed poor people, regardless of their color, to be largely responsible for their own fate." Armstrong's jeremiad reminds me of the dyspeptic letter that Arnold Schoenberg, exiled to Brentwood, California, wrote in 1938 complaining, perversely, that his fellow Jews had never shown any interest in his music. Show business is tough; everyone has bad days.

Teachout isn't even interested in what music was on the stand when Armstrong played.

Generalist critics, apparently unaware of how derivative *Pops* is, have rhapsodized over it, though a number have faulted it for being overly intellectual, as if books on music were supposed to be written in tweets and emoticons. But that criticism is misplaced, not only because of Teachout's sermonizing but also because of his cavalier approach to grounding claims. A phrase about Armstrong's mother—"In fact she was almost certainly working as a prostitute"—sent me scurrying to the endnotes to discover the basis of this hedged claim, without success. Very often when similar hedged claims appear they are supported by a single reminiscence gleaned from a variety of published sources without any evidence of further verification.

The citation mechanism in the book is so awkward that it is hard to track Teachout's sources, but his major debts are obvious enough. Although he claims that his is the first Armstrong biography written by a trained musician (Teachout played bass professionally for a decade), he is in no way the musical equal of the composer, conductor, horn player and copious writer Gunther Schuller. When discussing Armstrong's music Teachout is greatly beholden to Schuller's *Early Jazz* (1968) and *The Swing Era* (1989), which contain hundreds of transcriptions and analyses of recorded music. Teachout's description of "West End Blues" appropriates Schuller's idea that its opening trumpet solo employs a technique called "metrical modulation," usually associated with the music of Elliott Carter. In an endnote Teachout praises Schuller as the "first musician to notate [the solo] correctly," but on what basis is this true? The solo can be transcribed differently without recourse to "metrical modulation," an arcane late-modern device that Armstrong never encountered, and more in terms of the cross-rhythms that are the foundation of African-American music. Even though he transcribed the music, Schuller wrote that "these notes as played by Louis—not as they appear in notation—are as instructive a lesson in what constitutes swing as jazz has to offer." *Caveat lector*.

Hearing "West End Blues" through the notation, Teachout oddly withholds full approval; he says the performance is "not confiding but grand," whatever that distinction means. Fetishizing improvisation and parsing his praise in the usual discophile manner, he detects an air of "premeditated formality" in this holy grail of jazz solos and cites "considerable evidence, circumstantial and otherwise," of forethought on Armstrong's part, as if intention and even systematic craft were an aesthetic failure. Does Teachout think that Armstrong's other great performances were solely the product of instinct? His book provides ample evidence that Armstrong was thinking all the time, writing down his thoughts on a daily basis, listening to a wide range of music; all the more bizarre, then, that Teachout clings to notions of naïve spontaneity, however "noble."

For all his vast contribution to the understanding of jazz, Schuller had two unfortunate critical quirks that skewed his portrait of Armstrong, as Teachout points out. Schuller tended to chart the long career enjoyed by artists like Armstrong and Ellington as an exhilarating ascent and tragic decline, and like many jazz buffs of his generation he had a knee-jerk revulsion to anything commercial. Not surprisingly, he loved Armstrong the musician and bemoaned Armstrong the entertainer. In *Satchmo*, however, Gary Giddins showed how even a consummate jazz lover could admire the singer and the celebrity. Teachout takes Schuller to task for failing to appreciate Armstrong's later work, and while Teachout's account of the later years reprises Giddins's celebratory gestures, it doesn't examine the ever-evolving categories of seriousness and popularity that shaped the critical discourse around Armstrong's music. What was at stake in the debate, and for whom did it matter?

By transcribing so much of the music from recordings without studying the written arrangements and parts, Schuller unintentionally reinforced the stereotype that jazz musicians played only by ear. This problem is perhaps more acute in the study of big band music than small groups, and most serious, as I have discovered in my own research, in relation to Ellington's vast output, much of which was entirely written out with little room for improvisation. Because Ellington's materials were not available until 1988, when they were sold to the Smithsonian, all previous discussions of Ellington's music, Schuller's included, had no real knowledge of how Ellington worked as a composer. Some critics, including Teachout in a 1996 *Commentary* article titled "(Over)praising Ellington," even questioned whether he composed at all. The mountain of manuscripts at the Smithsonian settles the matter. Yet jazz critics, dancing in the dark, routinely pass

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judgment and write history based solely on recordings. Teachout, while touting his own musical credentials, never shows any interest in what music was on the stand when Armstrong, who as he indicates was a good reader with broad musical tastes, performed and recorded. (Michael Cogswell's *Louis Armstrong: The Offstage Story of Satchmo*, which illuminates Armstrong's private side with a gallery of rare photos and documents and a wise commentary, reproduces a page from the written-out arrangements that Armstrong used with his big band.)

The pitfalls of focusing exclusively on recordings are evident in Teachout's discussion of Armstrong's year with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. The orchestra, which played for white dancers at a club off Times Square, was the most important black band in New York during the 1920s, and its style established the foundation for swing. Teachout repeats the canard that the Henderson band was a bunch of uptight New Yorkers with little feeling for jazz and less for blues, and that Armstrong, fresh from his recordings with Joe Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, taught them how to swing. A more balanced and provocative account is found in Jeffrey Magee's superb recent study of Henderson, *The Uncrowned King of Swing*, which Teachout cites without seeming to have absorbed. Magee writes that with the much-told tale of how Armstrong taught the Hendersonians to swing, "The Great Man narrative has taken hold: Armstrong emerges as an extraordinary artist transcending an ordinary musical context." *Pops* exhibits the problems with "great man" history from beginning to end. Teachout predictably contrasts Armstrong's "blistering-hot chorus" with the "coy piece of pop *chinoiserie*," "Shanghai Shuffle," arranged by Don Redman, and he pays scant attention to the band's other great trumpet soloist, Joe Smith, who, like Ellington's Arthur Whetsol, played in a sweet introverted style similar and more than equal to that of Bix Beiderbecke, whom Teachout treats with awe.

Armstrong's recordings with Henderson certainly leave a bewildering impression of stylistic contrasts. The band could be sweet one moment, sassy the next. Jazz aficionados have trained themselves to isolate Armstrong's short and seemingly incongruous solos from their context. Magee analyzes these performances at great length from a different vantage point. Taking seriously Armstrong's statement in *Swing That Music* that he learned a lot in his year with Henderson, Magee regards the relative brilliance of Armstrong's solos not as evidence of an improvisational genius's subversion of compositional rigidity but as the fruits of Redman's skilled arrangements, themselves the fertile blending of two styles: one derived from Paul Whiteman, the other from Joe Oliver. Magee upturns the roles scripted for Whiteman and Oliver by jazz polemicists, with Whiteman representing "false jazz"—scored, diluted, commercial and white—and Oliver personifying the improvisatory and noncommercial qualities of "true" jazz. Magee also proposes a different way of assessing Armstrong's stint with Henderson, one that steers clear of the term "jazz" altogether. He examines the backgrounds of the musicians, the media that disseminated their music, the venues in which they performed, their repertory and their stylistic range. Magee's approach heightens our appreciation for all the musicians involved and allows us to listen with pleasure to Redman's arrangements, which would serve as blueprints for big band scores for decades to come, as well as Armstrong's star turns.

> Armstrong could make any performance a proclamation of the rights of the blues.

Teachout's allergies to revisionist scholarship, even when he acknowledges it, is equally apparent in his discussion of Armstrong's early life in New Orleans, a story greatly illuminated by Thomas Brothers in *Louis Armstrong's New Orleans* (2006). That book begins with a far more telling vignette than the Lewisohn concert—Armstrong's appearance with the Tuxedo Brass Band in 1921. Armstrong recalled the event fondly later in his life: "I felt just as proud as though I had been hired by John Philip Sousa." According to Brothers, the band—founded by two uptown (non-Creole) musicians, William Ridgley and Oscar Celestin—played "almost everywhere in the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana that a colored band could go," and its success allowed it to hire old-school Creole musicians, producing a band that was "integrated" in terms of New Orleans cultural racism but not Louisiana apartheid. Creole musicians often dismissed "uptown" players as "routine" (illiterate) or "ratty," so their collaboration marked an unusual show of respect. Teachout mentions this incident *en passant*, as evidence that as early as 1921 Armstrong's reputation was established in his hometown, and notes that in 1968 Armstrong was still recalling his days with the band as a "thrilling pleasure." But he emphasizes Armstrong's discomfort with the band's rigidity rather than exploring the reasons for his abiding pleasure. Brothers, by contrast, asks an important historical question: why would the 20-year-old Armstrong have held a parade band in such high regard?

Brothers explains that by marching with the Tuxedo Brass Band, "Armstrong believed that he had solved, through his musical ability, the problem of trouble-free movement through a dangerous city." Movement around New Orleans, either by foot or streetcar, was determined by the precise hue of one's complexion, delimited by laws that segregated seating in public transportation and by eruptions of racial violence, such as when Jim Jeffries ("The Great White Hope") was defeated by the African-American boxer Jack Johnson in a bout in Reno, Nevada, on July 4, 1910. Race riots broke out across the nation. During the melee in New Orleans, Brothers writes, "Armstrong remembered hiding in his house while gangs wandered through the neighborhood in search of random targets on whom to release their rage." Parades by black bands simultaneously asserted a freedom of movement and confirmed the map of racial oppression, as band members encountered hecklers and worse while crossing an exclusively white area known as the Irish Channel. With the Tuxedo Brass Band Armstrong could travel with relative safety through parts of New Orleans that would have been too dangerous for him to traverse alone. But the rough realities of parade music also point to an aesthetic contrast. Brothers notes that in the European tradition, music performed indoors is valued more than street music; the concert hall "imitates the contemplative atmosphere of church worship." Outdoors in New Orleans, there was no limit on the size (or racial makeup) of the audience, no charge for admission; the spirit was not contemplative but celebratory in a specifically African-American way. Parades, Brothers says, "brought the ecstatic behavior of the ring shout into the streets."

By surveying the social geography of New Orleans and analyzing the performance of parade music, Brothers manages to take preliminary soundings of an elusive quality: the meaning of music in Arm-

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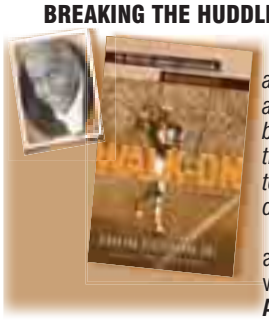

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strong's social climate and career. Music would be a means, at least wishfully, of evading racist violence, but it also conveyed the "spirituality, communality and politics" of the Sanctified Church. Teachout does note that the young Armstrong sang gospel songs in church, but he creates the impression that in his later music and life Armstrong slipped the grip of the Sanctified. When Teachout discusses the recording that has come to represent Armstrong's highest achievement, "West End Blues," he evaluates it in terms of European music; he likens the opening solo to the bel canto cadenzas of Amelita Galli-Curci and Luisa Tetrazzini, and praises the "refulgent splendor" of Armstrong's tone as "worlds away from [Joe] Oliver's staid playing," as if Armstrong's solo was a rebuke of his mentor. ("Refulgent" should warn us that history is not found in fancy adjectives, and that jazz history has to pay closer attention to its own forms before leaping to European parallels.) Italian opera was popular in New Orleans, but the wailing swan dive that launches "West End Blues"—a favorite gesture of Sidney Bechet, with whom Armstrong had recorded a few years before—and the bugle call upturn that follows it were common idioms of early jazz vocabulary. The new element, perhaps, was the headlong double-time tumble that follows them. These three contrasting gestures are little bundles of association out of which Armstrong wove a story that has nothing to do with Donizetti.

Teachout's final debt is to Laurence Bergreen's *Louis Armstrong*, even though he savaged it in a review for the *New York Times*, mainly because Bergreen was not an established jazz critic and did not stress the Horatio Alger plot that Teachout had envisioned for Armstrong's life story as early as 1997. (Oddly, Teachout praised instead an odiously condescending psycho-biography by James Lincoln Collier.) In *Pops*, Teachout does not challenge Bergreen's biographical work, but he does ignore some of Bergreen's most telling vignettes. When Ralph Gleason asked Armstrong why he chose to live in Corona, Queens, rather than with other star entertainers in Beverly Hills, Armstrong explained: "Even though I've played with a lot of them—Danny Kaye, Sinatra—I don't even know where they live. In fact I've never been invited to the home of a movie star, not even Bing's." Teachout, always presenting Crosby, along with Bix Beiderbecke, Harry James, Bobby Hackett and other white jazz stars, in the most positive light, does not mention this statement.

Like earlier biographers, Teachout offers plenty of anecdotes about Joe Glaser, Armstrong's mob-connected manager, whose genius for publicity and repertory made the trumpeter rich and the manager several times richer. (To his credit, Teachout quotes Armstrong's remark that Glaser, too, never invited him to his house.) Teachout does not improve upon the usual (minimal) understanding of the seamy economics of jazz. He mentions that Harry James died much wealthier than Armstrong, but he does not explain why a figure who was nationally famous for perhaps a decade could bank more money than a man who was an international star for nearly half a century, and arguably the most famous musician of the twentieth century. Was Glaser, himself financially obligated to organized crime overlords, the only one looking out for Armstrong's interests? Was Armstrong, like some other great artists, simply incapable of understanding finances, or were black musicians, no matter how famous, victims of systematic exploitation by presenters, record labels, radio and TV networks, and publishers? And are things any different today? The next book on Armstrong needs to answer such questions.

If we have to play the party game of summing up a personality with a song title, a much better fit for Armstrong than "Ac-cen-tu-ate the Positive" might be "I Got a Right to Sing the Blues," which he recorded as a heroic anthem in 1933. The Arlen/Koehler title resonated with Armstrong, who grew up in poverty, but it also captured the way he made every performance, whether trumpeted or sung, a proclamation of the rights of the blues, of the uniquely African-American sound of his music, to stand proudly next to any other musical style, even that of the European concert hall. When Armstrong lifted his trumpet to his lips or began to sing, the demeaning comic persona, that shield against indignity, gave way to a wide, vibrant river of sound that lent a voice to millions of people, in America and beyond, who had been consigned to silence. Testifying, in every performance, to the depths of his musical idiom, Armstrong defied the prejudices of both classical musicians and, even more, jazz critics who believed that they could contain his work within their crude notions of stylistic progress, authenticity or moral rectitude. ■

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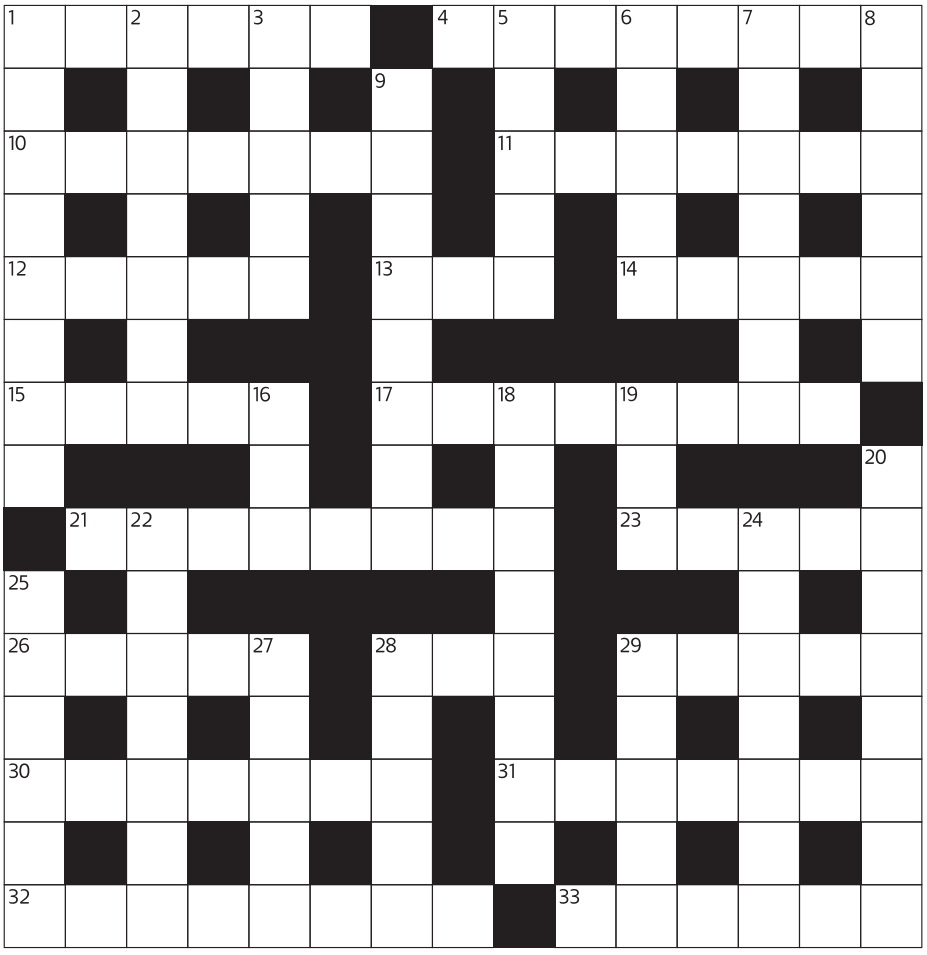

ACROSS

1 *Skate*, for example, expected to be quiet. (6)

4 Was 3 down their next-to-last? (8)

10 What he does if his corset's too tight is a center of uncle's trouble! (7)

11 Does one have a capital hiding place, if somewhat less than most wealthy? (7)

12 and **13** Gets a certain amount of help otherwise denied as aiding the cause. (8)

14 Make 30. (5)

15 See 29 down

17 Nippers—or is their capacity larger? (8)

21 Approaches the extremities, but about equal—and measures both. (8)

23 Drop a sort of Bostonian snipe, by the sound of it. (5)

26 and **28** Discovers no response upon calling, evidently. (5,3)

29 Certainly not 29 down and 15. (5)

30 How the ogre's wife ended up in the doorway? (7)

31 The model of a rather well-turned bird? (7)

32 Set off with a school partner around. (8)

33 Saturday or Sunday might be a bad time for getting something done. (3-3)

DOWN

1 Is a snail somewhat like a phoney nickel? (8)

2 See 16 down

3 Part of Cooper's production of guncases. (5)

5 The poet's heart is certainly not full, considering it's shape. (5)

6 and **19** Where the game might be held in England. (It's as good as won!) (2,3,3)

7 He might take off the Latin way of gaining height. (7)

8 This is more universally balanced than 5. (6)

9 Is Repeal to be considered a growing support? (8)

16 and **2** The height of lovey-dovey behavior for the star… (3,7)

18 …and plant a kiss on the bald pates as you wait there! (3,5)

19 See 6 down

20 Need just this in the abandoned manner? (8)

22 See 24

24 and **22** Certainly not quick in the daytime! (Walpurgis characters, no doubt!) (3,4,2,5)

25 See 29 down

27 Germanic form of a sort of 28 down, like the Maine air. (5)

28 The director might cry at the start! (5)

29, **15** and **28** across, **25** down Blind, as well as dumb? (If you don't see it, don't worry about it!) (3,2,5,3,2,4)

This puzzle originally appeared in the March 14, 1959, issue.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 303

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O	■	A	■	E	■	L	■	S	■	I	■	C	■	I
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P	A	N	T	H	E	R	S	■	S	H	A	S	T	A
A	■	■	■	A	■	Y	■	E	■	I	■	■	■	T
L	A	M	E	N	T	■	S	T	A	R	G	A	Z	E
A	■	A	■	D	■	F	■	H	■	D	■	V	■	■
N	A	R	Y	■	B	O	P	E	E	P	■	O	A	R
Q	■	Q	■	O	■	U	■	R	■	A	■	C	■	A
U	S	U	R	P	E	R	■	E	A	R	M	A	R	K
I	■	I	■	U	■	T	■	A	■	T	■	D	■	E
N	E	S	T	S	■	H	O	L	L	Y	W	O	O	D

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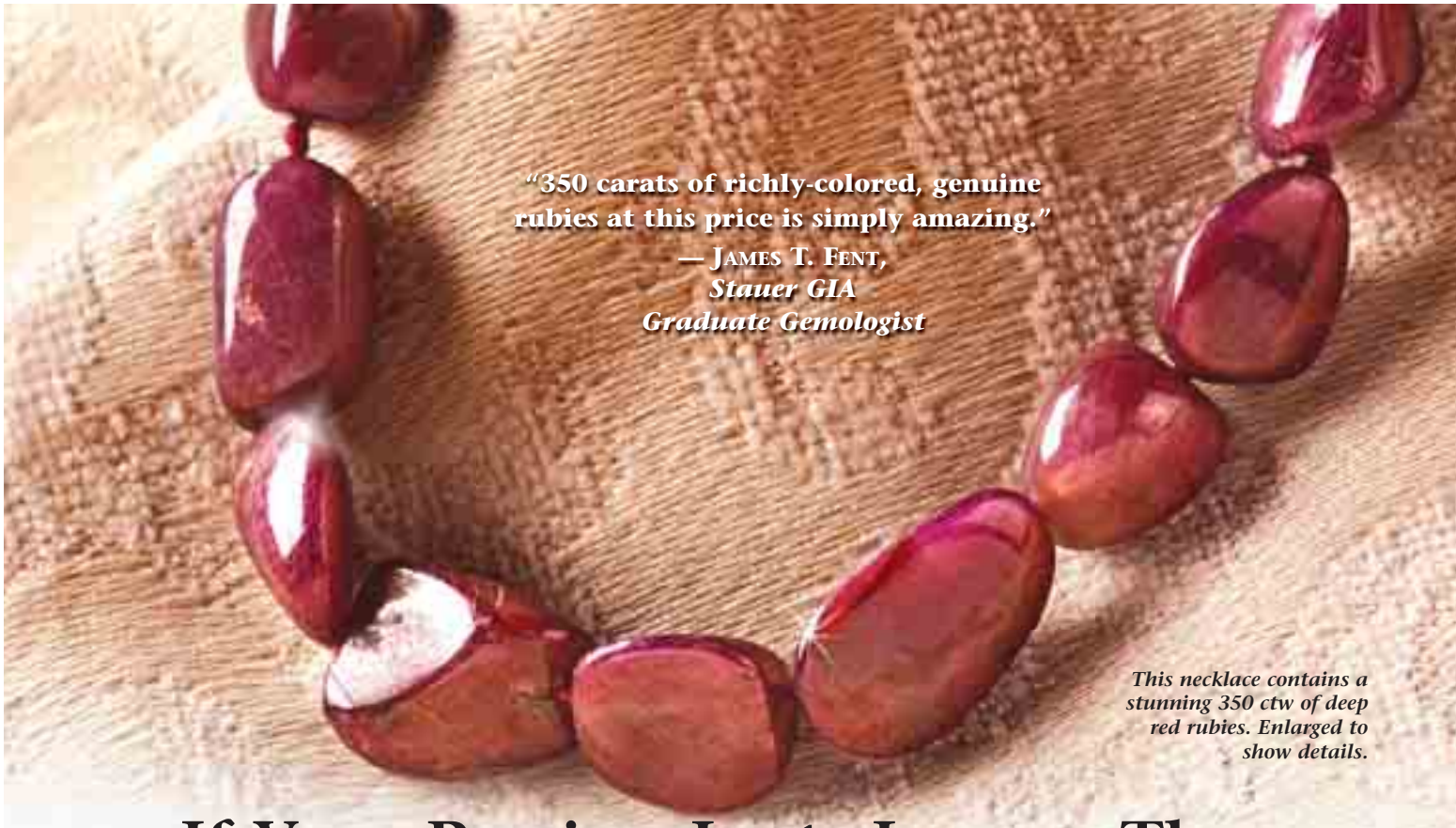
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This necklace contains a stunning 350 ctw of deep red rubies. Enlarged to show details.

If Your Passion Lasts Longer Than 4 Hours…Call Your Doctor

Spark her passion with a spectacular 350 carats of genuine polished rubies.

Need more passion in your life? Looking for some romantic heat to ignite that old flame? You're not going to find it in the drug store. The secret of history's great lovers had nothing to do with pharmaceuticals. Casanova and Valentino wooed women the old-fashioned way: with chivalry, poetry and gigantic gemstones.

If you want to melt her heart, forget subtlety. Go for fireworks. Our ***Polished Ruby Necklace*** features a whopping ***350 carats*** of smooth-tumbled, genuine rubies. The ***Polished Ruby Necklace*** is a grand gesture guaranteed to make her swoon.

The world's rarest and most precious stone has been working its magic for centuries. Ruby is the red variety of the mineral corundum, one of Earth's hardest minerals. It has everything a precious stone should have including intense color, superb hardness (second only to a diamond) and rarity. So it's no wonder that top quality rubies achieve such high prices at auctions, surpassing even the hammer price for diamonds in equal classification.

In the time of chivalry, the regal ruby was considered ***8 times more valuable than diamonds***. Ancient people even believed that rubies were lit from within by an inextinguishable flame. Luckily, after thousands of years reigning as the "King of Gems," the passionate fire inside of the radiant red ruby has shown no signs of cooling. Desire for this sultry, seductive stone is hotter than ever. And at a price this low, it's the perfect time to get things smoldering again.

Genuine ruby for under $2.00 per carat? Believe it. High-end jewelers can sell some rubies for more than $5,000 a carat! We think that's ridiculous in today's economy so we dropped that price by about 99.95%. How do we get our prices so low? Volume. Last year, we believe Stauer was the largest buyer of carat-weight emeralds in the world and this year we're on track to be the largest buyer of carat-weight rubies. At 350 carats for under $150, we've really outdone ourselves this time. Designed to take her breath away, this windfall of enormous rubies is strung together into an elegant, hand-knotted 18" necklace that secures with a gold vermeil lobster clasp and includes a 2" extender. The size and shape of each stone is unique, with natural color variations from burgundy to bordeaux.

Discover the passionate fire and exquisite color inside these radiant rubies

Our passionate guarantee. The seductive fire of brilliant red ruby expresses your love like no other gemstone. Try our ***Polished Ruby Necklace*** for 30 days. If for any reason you are not completely satisfied with your purchase, simply return it to us for a full refund of the purchase price.

JEWELRY SPECS:
- 350 ctw of genuine smooth-tumbled rubies
- Gold vermeil clasp
- 18" necklace with 2" extender

Stauer *Polished Ruby Necklace*
350 ctw—Was ~~$395~~
Now, *Your price* **$145** +s&p

Call now to take advantage of this limited offer.

1-888-324-1969

Promotional Code RKN167-01
Please mention this code when you call.

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Call now to secure this exceptional collector's fantasy piece!

1906 Barber Silver Proof
Only $99

For a limited time, you can obtain your own piece of American history that could have changed the face of U.S. coinage forever.

This commemorative piece represents one of the biggest "what-ifs?" in numismatic history! It's a special one-ounce Gem Proof struck in .999 pure silver to the exact design of U.S. Mint Chief Engraver Charles Barber's entry in the informal competition for the design of the 1907 Gold Double Eagle. As many know, famed sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and his remarkable design won, thanks in no small part to his close relationship with President Teddy Roosevelt. Charles Barber's pattern was completed in the fall of 1906—shortly after the President asked Saint-Gaudens to go back to the drawing board—and the only known pattern piece resides in the Smithsonian. So why did the President reject Barber's design? And, why wasn't Barber's pattern destroyed as it likely should have been? We may never know. However, had Barber's design won, we might be talking about $20 "Barbers" instead of $20 "Saints."

Officially authorized by the numismatic experts at the Smithsonian Institution, this special edition Silver Proof features mirrored fields and detailed frosted images. Each has been authenticated by Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC) in recognition of its historic importance in U.S. coinage history. Order yours today before this limited edition is gone!

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